This is the first volume of a two-volume *Soviet Foreign Policy 1917-1980*, covering the period from the Great October Socialist Revolution to the end of the Second World War.

From its foundation, the Soviet government has never strayed from the principle of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. The book shows that the Soviet Union has always worked for peace, disarmament, and against imperialist aggression. Peace and international security have always been the key objectives of Soviet foreign policy.

Taking guidance in V. I. Lenin's principles of true democracy, recognition of the equality of all states, big and small, and of the right of nations to independent statehood, the Soviet government has suited its foreign policy to current international situation.

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Volume I

1917 - 1945

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the centuries, even the millenia, ever since the early times when the first states were formed, their policies, both home and foreign, which govern relations with other states, were determined by the interests of the ruling, exploiter classes. There rose and fell the monarchies of the Ancient East, the republics of Ancient Greece, the Roman and Byzantine empires, the feudal states of the Middle Ages, the absolute monarchies and bourgeois democracies of the modern age, the fascist dictatorships and colonial empires of the period of imperialism, but for all the variety of alternating social and political forms foreign policy was always and everywhere the tool of the exploiting minority. It sometimes happened that the interests of the ruling class coincided with those of the nation as a whole, particularly in wars against foreign invaders. Usually, however, they conflicted with the interests of the toiling majority. This has been the case since time immemorial, since the emergence of classes and states.

The situation changed radically with the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia. For the first time in the history of mankind there appeared an entirely new foreign policy which began to serve not the exploiters, but the workers, the working class, which came to power and represents the interests of the whole working people. This could not fail to change, as it did, the nature of foreign policy, its aims and tasks, the source of its strength and influence, and its methods.

The founder of socialist foreign policy and the creator of its principles and methods was V. I. Lenin. He not only elaborated the main propositions of this policy, but as head of the Soviet government, was the first to put them into practice.

The policy of any state is determined in the final analysis by its economic and social system. As Lenin remarked, "the economic interests and the economic position of the classes which rule our state lie at the root of both our home and foreign policy".[1] The radical differences between the economic basis of socialism and that of capitalism also determine the fundamental differences in their foreign policy.

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, p. 365.

In capitalist society, which is based on private ownership of the means of production and on the exploitation of man by man, the driving force of foreign policy is the desire of the ruling class to strengthen the exploitatory system, to preserve and extend the sphere of exploitation to retain and seize markets, strategic positions and foreign territories, and to enslave other peoples. The foreign policy of capitalist states, by virtue of their social nature, always shows tendencies towards expansion and aggression, towards the preparation and unleashing of wars of aggrandisement, the creation of military blocs and the arms race. These aggressive tendencies in the foreign policy of capitalism became particularly strong at the monopoly stage of its development, when capitalism turned into imperialism. Striking examples of this are the predatory policy of German imperialism, which created the monstrous terrorist Hitlerite dictatorship, and the attempts of US monopoly capital to obtain world supremacy and to crush liberation movements in all parts of the world.

The foreign policy of socialism is fundamentally different. In socialist society there is public ownership of the means of production. A planned economy precludes production anarchy, crises and the struggle for markets. Here there is neither exploitation of man by man, nor oppression of nations. The driving force of socialist foreign policy is the desire of the working people, who hold power, to create the most favourable conditions for building a new, most just and free society. The socialist economy aims at satisfying the constantly growing material and cultural needs of the working people. Wars can only prevent this. The inner laws of socialist society not only do not engender the desire to enslave and exploit other peoples, the desire for aggression, wars and aggrandisement, but, on the contrary, make the socialist state the irreconcilable enemy of aggression and encroachment on foreign territory, on the peace, security and independence of other nations. Socialist foreign policy is aimed at restraining the aggressor, at ensuring the peace and independence of the peoples.

The foreign policy of the USSR reflects an harmonic combination of the national interests of the Soviet people with the international obligations of the working class that has come to power. Soviet foreign policy organically combines patriotism and service of the interests of the Fatherland with internationalism.

For decades the Soviet state withstood alone, firmly and courageously, the intrigues of the imperialist states, which used armed intervention, economic blockade, diplomatic isolation and other measures in their attempt to destroy the land of socialism. Foreign policy played a major part in this struggle of the Soviet Union against imperialism. It helped to safeguard the security of the first socialist state and thus to defend the interests of the Soviet people, to build socialism and to move on to the building of communism. By carrying out this national task, Soviet foreign policy helped to preserve and

strengthen the world's main bulwark of socialism. In so doing it helped to safeguard the supreme interests of the working class throughout the world, the working people of all countries. This is why, by promoting the strengthening and flourishing of the Soviet Union and, since socialism extended beyond the confines of a single country, of the whole community of socialist countries, Soviet foreign policy is objectively contributing to the cause of the social liberation of all mankind.

By taking power into its hands, the working class acquired new levers for revolutionary, transformative activity within state frontiers and simultaneously new means of influencing the course of world development with the aim of ensuring peace, the freedom of peoples, and social progress. A strengthening of the economic and political might of the Soviet state increases the possibility of exerting such an influence. The building of the new, communist society in the USSR is in itself helping to blaze the road to the future of all mankind.

The source of the power and authority of socialist foreign policy is, above all, the might of the Soviet state and the advantages of the socialist system. The foreign policy of the USSR rests on the economic, political and military might of the Land of the Soviets, a great world power. It enjoys the constant support of the Soviet people and draws on its patriotism and profound devotion to the Fatherland. Popular approval gives Soviet policy the steadfast firmness, consistency and confidence in its strength and in its rightness that it demonstrates daily and that the Soviet government has shown in its long struggle with our country's numerous enemies, particularly in the two cruel wars of 1918-1920 and 1941-1945, when the very existence of the Soviet state was at stake. A striking example of this is the Great Patriotic War, when, at the summons of the Communist Party, all Soviet people rose as one man to the defence of their socialist home. The Soviet people warmly supports and approves of the policy of the government of the USSR.

The Soviet Union has loyal friends and allies abroad as well. For its part it is a reliable support for them, and they can always count on its true friendship and fulfilment of its obligations to its allies. Both our friends and our enemies alike know and remember this well.

The peoples of the whole world rightly see the Soviet country as the most reliable bulwark of peace, socialism and national independence, in other words, as the most loyal defender of their vital interests. The sympathy of the working masses in all countries and also of the peoples fighting against imperialism is also a source of the authority of Soviet foreign policy.

Thus, Soviet socialist foreign policy rests on the power of the Soviet state, on the patriotism of the Soviet people, on the support of its foreign friends, above all, its friends in the socialist camp, and on the sympathy of the international working-class and national

liberation movement.

The aims of Soviet foreign policy, as formulated by the 24th and 25th CPSU congresses, are to ensure together with the other socialist countries favourable international conditions for the building of socialism and communism, to strengthen the unity and cohesion of the socialist countries, their friendship and brotherhood; to support the national liberation movement and provide all-round cooperation with the young developing states; to uphold consistently the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems: to give a firm rebuff to the aggressive forces of imperialism; and to save mankind from a new world war. All the practical activity of the CPSU and the Soviet state in the sphere of international politics is directed towards the achievement of these aims. Together with the other states of the socialist community the USSR pursues a fundamentally class foreign policy. Its integral component parts are: a course aimed at strengthening peace and international security, solidarity with the liberation struggle of the peoples of all countries and continents, and resistance to infringements of their freedom and independence and of their right to determine their own destiny.

The history of Soviet foreign policy falls into two main stages. The first lasted from the Great October Socialist Revolution to the breakaway from capitalism of more than ten European and Asian countries, i.e., approximately to the end of the Second World War. Throughout this period the Soviet country and the Mongolian People's Republic were the only socialist countries in the world. The Soviet Union enjoyed the support of the international proletariat, but as a state was isolated and alone in capitalist encirclement. Guided by the principle of the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems, the Soviet Union always sought to maintain peaceful relations with capitalist states, but in so doing has encountered many acts of aggression and provocation on their part. In 1918-1920 the Soviet state repulsed the armed intervention of the imperialists and won peace. But it was very hard to preserve peace in the years that followed, particularly after the setting up of the nazi dictatorship in Germany. In the summer of 1941 nazi Germany attacked the USSR. The period of the peaceful development of the Soviet country was interrupted.

The victory of the USSR over the nazi aggressors and the triumph of popular revolutions in a considerable number of European and Asian countries opened the second stage in the development of Soviet foreign policy. The capitalist encirclement was broken and the USSR ceased to be alone. It now appeared in the international arena in the ranks of a whole camp of socialist states. The world system of socialism had emerged.

At the first stage the interstate relations of the Soviet Union were confined to relations with bourgeois states—apart from the MPR there

were no other states then. Soviet foreign relations were based on the principles of struggle against imperialist aggression and for peaceful coexistence of states belonging to opposing social systems, and on the principles of the Leninist nationalities policy aimed at supporting the liberation struggle of the peoples.

These principles have fully retained their significance at the second stage also, but they proved to be insufficient in so far as the Soviet Union now had relations with other socialist states. The USSR bases relations within the socialist system on the principles of socialist internationalism, of applying the Marxist principle of proletarian internationalism to the interstate relations of socialist countries. In this new application internationalism means basing relations between sovereign and fully equal socialist states on the principles of all-round cooperation and comradely mutual assistance.

These relations of fraternal mutual assistance are an entirely new phenomenon in relations between states. They are not confined to the framework of mutual advantage, but provide for aid and support which go far beyond this framework. The principles on which the new type of international relations that has developed within the socialist system is based are set down in the collective documents of the world communist movement. Thus, the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969 stressed that the development and strengthening of each individual socialist country was an important condition of the advance of the world socialist system as a whole. "Following the victory of the socialist revolution in many countries," one of its documents says, "the building of socialism on the basis of general laws is proceeding in various forms, which take into account concrete historical conditions and national distinctions. Successful development of this process implies strict adherence to the principles of proletarian internationalism, mutual assistance and support, equality, sovereignty and non-interference in one another's internal affairs."[2]

The possibility of and need for close cooperation between the socialist countries is based on objective prerequisites on the similarity of economic and social systems, on the unity of the aims of the socialist states which are the building of socialism and communism. All this in turn gives rise in the socialist states to a community of foreign policy interests and tasks. The building of the new society demands a stable peace and a concerted struggle against imperialist aggression. The common tasks and interests engendered by the laws inherent in the socialist system create the basis for the development of friendly relations within the socialist camp.

The support and development of these relations are one of the

[2] *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, Prague, 1969, p. 23.

prime tasks of the foreign policy of the USSR. Soviet policy is directed towards "the utmost strengthening of the world socialist system; promotion of fraternal relations with all the socialist countries on lines of complete equality and voluntary cooperation".[3] The solution of this task is of truly major significance for a successful struggle for socialism and communism in all the countries of the socialist community, and the Soviet Union is sparing no efforts to strengthen the solidarity of the socialist states.

As long as the USSR was the only socialist country, the working people of the Soviet Union built socialism by their own efforts, by dint of tremendous exertion. Now there is a great community of socialist states. Of course, today also each socialist country mobilises its internal resources as much as possible in building the new society. But now all the countries of the socialist system are able to enlist the support of other members of the socialist community, developing relations of all-round cooperation and mutual assistance with them. The foreign policy of each socialist country is the sovereign policy of a sovereign state. At the same time, by virtue of the specific nature of the mutual relations between socialist countries, the policy of each of them is based not only on that country's national economic and political forces, not only on its own authority and influence, but also on the might and authority of the world socialist system as a whole.

Both the successful building of the new society in each socialist country and the effectiveness of the actions of the socialist states in the international arena depend to a great extent on the development of relations of cooperation between the fraternal countries and on the strength of these relations in all spheres of economic and political life.

The solidarity of the socialist states is particularly important in the struggle against the aggressive forces of imperialism, the struggle to ensure the security of each socialist country and preserve world peace. The socialist states have created an effective body for interstate political cooperation in the Warsaw Treaty Organisation. With the help of this organisation the security of the states in the socialist community has been firmly ensured and all the gains of the socialist revolutions have been safeguarded.

A major role in increasing the efficiency of social production, uniting the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution with the advantages of socialism, and raising the material well-being of the working people in the socialist states is played by the implementation of the complex programme of socialist economic integration. Integration is a new, higher stage of economic cooperation of the socialist states, which makes it possible to ensure the broad development of international specialisation and production cooperation,

[3] *The Road to Communism*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1962, p. 582.

the joint mastering of advanced technology and the creation of joint enterprises, and the joint solution of important economic problems.

The socialist states also favour close coordination in the sphere of ideological, politico-educational work. These forms of collaboration are acquiring a special significance at a time when the imperialists, in an attempt to adjust to the new situation, are seeking to "erode" socialism from within, to make use of ideological sabotage.

A key role in strengthening the unity of the socialist community is played by the development of all-round cooperation between the USSR and the other socialist states, by a resolute struggle against anti-Sovietism. The Soviet Union is the oldest socialist country and the most powerful of the socialist states in the economic and military respects. Had the Soviet Armed Forces not defeated the nazi aggressors in the Second World War, had the People's Democracies not been protected against the encroachments of imperialism in the postwar years, and had the USSR not extended economic assistance to them, the socialist system in the People's Democracies would not have been able to triumph and become consolidated.

The Soviet Armed Forces are the most powerful and modern in the socialist camp. They ensure its reliable defence. The nuclear power of the Soviet Union is a most important factor in restraining the aggressive forces of imperialism and averting a new world war.

The powerful economic potential of the USSR, its scientific and technological achievements are a most valuable asset of the socialist community in the process of implementing the programme of complex economic integration.

The CPSU and the Soviet government have always attached and will always attach prime importance to the development of all-round cooperation with the fraternal countries. This is the main feature of the foreign policy activity of the Soviet state.

The foreign policy of the socialist states is one of the channels by which the creative transforming activity of the proletariat, which holds state power, and subsequently of the socialist state of the whole people, is proceeding. A glance at the international events of the postwar period is enough to show that if the socialist countries close their ranks, if their actions are coordinated, they all achieve the most important, constantly growing successes in the strengthening and development of socialist society and the consolidation of peace.

Of course, the formation of a new type of international relations and the development of the fraternal alliance of socialist states is a complex historical process. It frequently involves overcoming age-old traditions and breaking with vestiges of national dissension and mistrust; it involves the creation of a many-sided and well organised system of economic, political and cultural interstate relations that is in the interests of all peoples. Efforts must therefore be made to overcome difficulties that may be encountered here.

Soviet foreign policy takes into account the complexity of forming the new type of international relations. But it proceeds from the fact that socialism contains none of the contradictions that are inherent in capitalism, and that this or that disagreement which arises between the socialist countries can and should be overcome on the basis of proletarian internationalism and fraternal cooperation. A guarantee of the successful solution of the complex problems of creating and developing the international system of socialist states, which is unprecedented in world history, are consistent internationalism and steadfast determination to strengthen the community of socialist countries.

Following the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia the Soviet state presented all the peoples populating it with the right and opportunity to create their own states. The October Revolution guaranteed the state independence of Poland, Finland and a number of other countries. The working people of the majority of the nationalities that inhabited Russia, however, after shaking off the power of the exploiters, did not wish to secede from Soviet Russia, from the victorious Russian working class, which had helped them obtain freedom and without whose aid they would have been enslaved by the imperialists.

Having implemented the Leninist principle of the self-determination of nations in their own country, the CPSU and the Soviet government are working to secure its triumph in all other parts of the globe as well. The CPSU Programme states that the Party and the whole Soviet people "consider it their duty to support the sacred struggle of the oppressed peoples and their just anti-imperialist wars of liberation".[4]

In the chronicle of the national liberation struggle, which has led to the decline and collapse of the imperialist colonial system, the tremendous role of the Soviet state is recorded for all time, because from the first days of its existence it gave active support to the peoples in their struggle for freedom. Among the countries that have received active support from the Soviet Union in their struggle for national liberation and the strengthening of their newly-won independence, apart from the states of the socialist system, there are many developing countries: Afghanistan, India, Algeria, Syria, Indonesia, Iraq, the Lebanon and others. Some countries have been helped by the Soviet Union to defend their independence against armed attack by the imperialists. The struggle of the peoples against imperialism for national liberation is made infinitely easier by the very fact of the existence of a great socialist power—the Soviet Union, which disposes of tremendous political and economic power. Great is the role of the economic and technological assistance which the Soviet Union gives the developing states of Asia and Africa on the most preferential terms and without

[4] *The Road to Communism*, p. 508.

any political conditions that would violate national sovereignty and independence.

One of the key points of the Soviet Union's international policy in recent years was the struggle to eliminate seats of war in Southeast Asia created by the aggression of the United States, and the extensive and many-sided assistance to the heroic Vietnamese people and the other peoples of Indochina who are fighting against foreign invaders. The victory of the Vietnamese people is the result of their great feat in the struggle for freedom, it is the common success of the forces of peace, democracy and socialism.

The Soviet Union resolutely came out in support of the Arab peoples who have been subject to aggression on the part of Israel, encouraged by imperialist and Zionist circles. Thanks to the support of the peoples of the Arab East by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and all anti-imperialist forces, neo-colonialist plans to overthrow progressive regimes set up in a number of Arab states have been thwarted. The Soviet Union consistently supports a political settlement in the Middle East based on the total withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied Arab territories and respect of the independence and legitimate rights of the states and peoples of this region, including the right of the Arab people of Palestine, to create their own state.

The peoples fighting against imperialism fully appreciate the support given them by the Soviet Union and the consistent internationalism of the foreign policy of the CPSU and the Soviet state. "There is a Vietnamese proverb that says 'When you drink water, remember its source'," says the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Vietnam, Le Duan. "Today in the joyful atmosphere connected with the victory, the Workers' Party of Vietnam and the Vietnamese people remember again and again the important contribution which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people have made to the revolutionary cause of the Vietnamese people over the last almost fifty years. From the very first days when the Vietnamese revolution was still in embryo, up to the glorious victories, particularly in the struggle against the American imperialists and for the salvation of our homeland and the building of socialism, the CPSU, the Soviet government and the Soviet people, acting in the spirit of noble internationalism, have constantly stood by the Vietnamese people, invariably rendering it heartfelt support, generous aid full of fraternal feelings."[5]

Statesmen of the developing Asian and African countries have frequently placed on record their gratitude to the Soviet Union for its support in the struggle against imperialism. Jawaharlal Nehru, that outstanding leader of the national liberation movement of India,

[5] *Pravda*, July 11, 1973.

noted: "With eastern countries like China, Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan, the Soviet Russia adopted a very generous policy. They gave up old Tsarist privileges and tried to be very friendly. This was in accordance with their principles of freedom for all subject and exploited peoples.... The imperialist Powers, like England, were often put in a false position by this generosity of Soviet Russia, and the eastern countries made comparisons which were not to the advantage of England and the other Powers."[6] Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of the UAR, wrote in his time about the role of the USSR in the liberation movement: "To a large extent the national revolutionary movement of the peoples of Asia and Africa against imperialism and backwardness, which is a feature of modern times, particularly in the important period after the Second World War, owes its victories to the existence and might of the Soviet Union, which has become a real factor curbing imperialism and creating for the forces of the national revolution exceptionally favourable opportunities for playing on the largest scale an effective role in the struggle for independence and progress."[7] An eminent figure in the African national liberation movement, Kwame Nkrumah, assessing the role of the USSR in the rendering of assistance to the liberation movement of the peoples of Africa, stressed: "Were it not for the Soviet Union, the movement for liberation from the colonial yoke in Africa would have felt the full force of harsh and rude suppression."[8]

The Soviet Union supports the complete abolition of all forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism and the national freedom of all peoples. "The whole world knows that, acting on Lenin's behests, our Party and people actively support the national liberation struggle of the peoples and the progressive policy of countries liberated from colonial oppression," stated Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, in his report on the fiftieth anniversary of the USSR.[9] The Soviet Union is the best friend and most reliable support of peoples who are struggling for their independence.

In his study of capitalist society and the problems of the proletarian revolution, Lenin discovered the law of the uneven development of capitalism. From this law Lenin drew a conclusion of exceptional importance. "Socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously *in all* countries," he wrote. "It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain

[6] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, Lindsay, Drummond, London, 1949, p. 658.

[7] *The USSR and African Countries, 1946-1962. Documents and Materials*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1963, p. 627 (in Russian).

[8] Ibid., p. 360.

[9] L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 85.

bourgeois or pre-bourgeois."[10]

Thus, from the possibility of the victory of the revolution first in one country there objectively follows the inevitability of a period of the coexistence on our planet of two different social systems: the new, socialist system and the old, capitalist one. Such a situation has indeed arisen beginning with the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia and continuing up to our day. The coexistence of countries with different social systems is an objective reality, in which the whole of mankind has been living for more than half a century.

Since this is the objective situation, since two different social systems do coexist and struggle with each other, the question inevitably arises as to the character of the relations between states which belong to these two opposing systems. This question arose as soon as the first socialist state was created—on November 7, 1917.

Lenin constantly pointed to the danger of imperialist intervention and aggression and took all possible measures to create and strengthen the military potential of the young Soviet state. These measures arose from the need to be prepared to repulse an attack by the imperialists and to defend the gains of the socialist revolution.

By mercilessly repulsing the aggressive designs of imperialism, Lenin sought to ensure peace which was essential for the consolidation of the Soviet state and the building of socialism.

The real possibility of preserving peace and establishing the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems does not depend only on the position of the socialist states, of course. Imperialism remains a source of constant danger to the cause of peace and social progress. Soviet power had to wage a resolute and bitter struggle for peace from the very moment of the victory of the October Revolution. It had barely triumphed before the imperialist powers had recourse to armed intervention against Soviet Russia. Only after being repulsed were they compelled to reconcile themselves to the existence of a socialist state. But they did not abandon their hopes to use military force again with the aim of destroying this state. At that time imperialism still reigned supreme in the world arena, and therefore peaceful coexistence could not be lasting. While pursuing a policy of peace in the situation of his day, Lenin predicted the inevitability of "terrible collisions" with the imperialists and urged careful preparation for the second round of the wars with the aggressors. The Second World War and the Hitlerite aggression against the USSR proved how right Lenin was.

After the Second World War great changes took place in the international political situation. These were produced by the defeat of the fascist aggressors in the war, in which the USSR and its armed

[10] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, Moscow, 1964, p. 79.

forces played a decisive role, and also by the growth of the economic power, the scientific and technological potential and the political authority of the Soviet Union, the creation of the world socialist community, the collapse of the imperialist colonial system and the embarking of the peoples of Asia and Africa on a path of independent development. As a result there was a very great shift in the balance of political forces in the world arena in favour of the forces of peace, democracy and socialism and to the detriment of the forces of war, reaction and imperialism. The increasing influence of progressive forces, and above all the growing might of the USSR, led to the emergence of additional possibilities of averting a new world war, possibilities which did not exist in the thirties when nazi aggression caused the Second World War. On the basis of an analysis of the changes which have taken place in the world arena, the CPSU and the international communist movement concluded that in the new situation it is possible to avert a world war by the combined efforts of the mighty socialist camp, the peace-loving non-socialist states, the international working class and all the forces championing the cause of peace.

In order to achieve this aim what is required are the most energetic combined efforts of the socialist states, the international working class, the national liberation movement and other peace-loving forces, their close alliance in the struggle against imperialism and its aggressive policies.

The struggle for peace and, consequently, the struggle against imperialist aggression for the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems has always been an important aim of the Soviet Union's foreign policy -a militant anti-imperialist policy. In seeking to avert another world war, the Soviet state has constantly condemned, and continues to condemn, all wars of aggrandisement and all colonial wars, the engineering of the seats of tension, all sorts of economic blockades, and other imperialist actions aimed at suppressing the national leberation movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The constant Soviet efforts to save mankind from a nuclear world war by carrying forward Lenin's peaceful coexistence principles in international relations is the strategic line of Soviet foreign policy. The policy of peaceful coexistence is not one of the expediency, but a long-lasting programme. A detailed definition of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems is given in the CPSU Programme: it presupposes "renunciation of war as a means of settling international disputes, and their solution by negotiation; equality, mutual understanding and trust between countries; consideration for each other's interests; non-interference in internal affairs; recognition of the right of every people to solve all the problems of their country by themselves; strict respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries; promotion

of economic and cultural cooperation on the basis of complete equality and mutual benefit.

"Peaceful coexistence serves as a basis for the peaceful competition between socialism and capitalism on an international scale and constitutes a specific form of class struggle between them. As they consistently pursue the policy of peaceful coexistence, the socialist countries are steadily strengthening the positions of the world socialist system in its competition with capitalism. Peaceful coexistence affords more favourable opportunities for the struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries and facilitates the struggle of the peoples of the colonial and dependent countries for their liberation".[11]

The peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems does not contradict the tasks of the development of the revolutionary process; it actually promotes the solution of these tasks.

Contrary to the assertions of bourgeois and "Left-wing" theoreticians, peaceful coexistence of states with different systems does not mean recognising the permanence of capitalism and of the socio-class "status quo" in the world. From the class point of view realising the principles of peaceful coexistence means ensuring the conditions for the peaceful development of the states of the socialist community, restraining the aggressive forces of imperialism and putting an end to the imperialist "export of counter-revolution". As the International Meeting of 1969 noted, the policy of peaceful coexistence "meets the general interests of the revolutionary struggle against every form of oppression and exploitation, and promotes friendship between all peoples and the development of fruitful economic, scientific, technological and other spheres of co-operation between countries with different social systems in the interests of social progress".[12]

A favourite slanderous fabrication of the enemies of socialism and the Soviet Union is that the USSR seeks to impose socialism on other countries by armed force. This intention is attributed to the Soviet Union by the propaganda of the most reactionary circles in the imperialist countries which spread stories about the "aggressiveness" of the Soviet Union. This slander could come only from people blinded by class hatred or consciously counting on ignorance of everything concerning the true policy of the Soviet government and the principles of Marxist-Leninist theory by which the CPSU is guided in its activity.

From the Marxist-Leninist point of view revolutions take place as a result of profound socio-economic processes the growth of the class struggle which is governed by objective laws of the social development

[11] *The Road to Communism*, p. 506.

[12] *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, pp. 31-32.

of a given country. In his writings Lenin gave a detailed analysis of when and under what conditions the growth of the class struggle, stemming from a sharp aggravation of the contradictions between the productive forces and production relations, creates a revolutionary situation which, given certain prerequisites, can lead to revolution. These statements of Lenin's clearly refute the assertions that Communists seek to introduce revolution from abroad, that revolution can be "made to order". Lenin wrote: "The rule of capitalism is being undermined not because somebody is out to seize power.... It would be impossible to put an end to the rule of capitalism if the whole course of economic development in the capitalist countries did not lead up to it."[13]

The Soviet people feels great sympathy for the revolutionary forces active in the capitalist world, shows class solidarity with them and gives them support. But this support is created not by "exporting revolution", but by struggling against intervention by the imperialist powers in the internal affairs of the peoples, i.e., against "exporting counter-revolution". When imperialist reaction raises a hue and cry against the alleged exporting of revolution, it is merely using this to mask its own intentions which are aimed at exporting counter-revolution, at restoring capitalism in countries which have broken away from it, and at re-establishing colonial oppression in new forms in countries which have cast it off.

The objective laws of historical development lead to the intensification of the crisis of the capitalist system and make the revolutionary transition to socialism, the creation of socialist society, inevitable. The policy of the imperialist states, both home and foreign, is aimed at stopping this inevitable development and preserving an obsolete and doomed system. The imperialist powers seek to arrest the onward march of history and turn back its wheel. In order to achieve this, the imperialists, as experience has shown, do not stop short of violence and war. The peace-loving policy of the Soviet Union hinders this course of world reaction, i.e., it promotes the progressive development of mankind, the triumph of the new and revolutionary over the old and obsolete.

Imperialism has already plunged mankind into two world wars, to say nothing of the hundreds of local wars, colonial and others, which are being waged almost continuously in one or other part of the world. After the Second World War reactionary imperialist circles began to prepare a nuclear world war. There arose the threat of a new crime against all mankind, so monstrous that even the terrible crimes of those responsible for the two world wars of the past pale before it.

Whereas the policy of imperialist reaction, aimed at preparing a world war, is criminal, the policy of the Soviet state, which strives to

[13] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, Moscow, 1964, p. 417.

curb aggression, is profoundly humane and meets the interests of all peoples. Its triumph is the victory of all that is progressive. It brings peace for working mankind, and this means in the nuclear age saving the lives of hundreds and hundreds of millions of workers and peasants in the different countries.

The principle of peaceful coexistence operates in the sphere of relations between states. And the Soviet government applies it only to interstate relations. The attempts of certain bourgeois specialists on international affairs to extend it to the sphere of relations between classes within capitalist countries and to counterpose peaceful coexistence to the revolutionary class struggle, or to the national liberation movement, are invalid. The development of the class struggle, like that of the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples, is determined by its own laws.

The Soviet Union regards peaceful coexistence as a prolonged and active struggle for peace against the aggressive strivings of imperialism. The policy of peaceful coexistence is aimed at preventing the imperialists from using armed force against peoples who have embarked upon the path of building socialism, against peoples who have cast off the yoke of colonialism. Soviet policy takes account of the lessons of the recent past and the demands of the age. Without slackening for a moment its vigilance with regard to the intrigues of the warmongers, the Soviet Union, true to Lenin's behests, resolutely stands for peace, for the maintenance and development of normal political and economic relations with all capitalist countries. In so doing the Soviet Union rejects all the current conceptions in the West which limit the sphere of peaceful coexistence to relations between the great powers only. The world is indivisible. One cannot speak in favour of peaceful coexistence and at the same time crudely violate this principle in relation to the small countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as some statesmen in the West do. Anyone who really wants normal mutual relations, based on the principle of peaceful coexistence, should extend this principle to all states irrespective of their size or geographical location.

"The CPSU has always assumed, and still assumes," Leonid Brezhnev states, "that the class struggle between the two systems—the capitalist and the socialist—in the economic and political, and also, of course, the ideological domains, will continue. That is to be expected since the world outlook and the class aims of socialism and capitalism are opposite and irreconcilable. But we shall strive to shift this historically inevitable struggle onto a path free from the perils of war, of dangerous conflicts and an uncontrolled arms race. This will be a tremendous gain for world peace, for the interests of all peoples, of all states."[14]

[14] L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, pp. 94-95.

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Socialist foreign policy has introduced new methods of diplomacy into international relations. Insofar as the policy of the socialist state is directed entirely towards safeguarding the people's interests, it has no need of the deceit and falsehood that are an indispensable part of imperialist policy and diplomacy. Soviet foreign policy has thrown off these attributes of old diplomacy. Soviet policy is honest and truthful, for it has nothing to hide from the people. For the same reason the Soviet government rejects secret diplomacy on principle. It stands for the maximum publicity in international relations.

Being true to its word is a constant feature of Soviet policy. The USSR faithfully observes treaties and strictly fulfils all the international obligations encumbent upon it.

In the sphere of foreign policy, as in other spheres, Lenin demanded a scientific approach. Soviet policy, both foreign and home, rests on the theory of scientific socialism. It is based on a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the objective laws of social development and a profound study of the changing international situation and takes careful account of the alignment of forces in the world arena.

Scientific Marxist analysis enables socialist foreign policy to expose imperialist policy, to discern the class essence of imperialist policy in the wording of diplomatic notes and speeches, to distinguish between words and deeds, and to detect and evaluate the true designs of bourgeois politicians behind their fine phrases.

Lenin based policy on a careful study of the adversary. "It is obviously by no means a matter of indifference to us," he said, "whether we shall deal with those people from the bourgeois camp who are inclined to settle the problem by war, or with those who are inclined towards pacifism."[15] Lenin demanded that the different trends within the bourgeoisie should be carefully taken into account, and rejected an indiscriminate approach which reduced the possibility of a flexible and effective policy and of acquiring allies, albeit temporary ones. In the struggle for peace against imperialism and aggression Leninist diplomacy always strove to seek out and win over allies and concerned itself with exposing and politically isolating the most aggressive representatives of imperialism.

Lenin taught that policy, including foreign policy, should combine high principles with flexibility. He rejected all sectarianism and dogmatism. Lenin did not shun compromises in cases when they were of use to the Soviet state and the great cause of building socialism and communism without being detrimental to the principles of the Communist Party.

The struggle of socialist and imperialist foreign policy has been the

[15] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Moscow, 1966, p. 264.

hub of all international affairs for more than fifty years now. In the course of this struggle socialist foreign policy is becoming increasingly influential, determining the development of the international situation to an ever greater extent.

Practice and results are the test of any policy. Soviet Leninist policy has withstood the test of time. Soviet policy was carried out under the tireless and bitter struggle of a people defending its state against a whole host of irreconcilable enemies. For decades the Soviet state had to withstand alone the assaults of world imperialism. The Soviet state has won all the wars that it has been compelled to wage. It has frustrated the intrigues of numerous strong and dangerous enemies and won the leading position which it now occupies as a great socialist power that exerts a tremendous and ever growing influence on the whole world and is capable of influencing the entire range of present-day international relations and the general trend of their development. The foreign policy and diplomacy of the USSR have contributed in no small part to this. Throughout the whole period from the time of the Great October Revolution, a period which has brought with it a most profound change in the social life of all mankind, Soviet foreign policy has helped to ensure the security of our country and its friends and to enhance steadily its authority in the international arena.

Today the principles of socialist foreign policy are gaining increasing recognition all over the world, whereas the sphere of the rule of imperialism and the operation of its standards of international life has been greatly reduced.

Particularly important in this respect is the period after the 24th CPSU Congress, a period of implementing the peace programme adopted by the Congress. The enterprising, purposeful policy of the CPSU, a policy which is based on profound scientific analysis of the problems of world development and which takes into account all the constructive possibilities present in the world, has ensured serious positive changes in international relations.

The major positive results of the meetings of Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, with leading figures of the USA, FRG, France and other states, the treaties and agreements concluded by the Soviet Union with the United States and the FRG, the constructive results of summit meetings of leaders of other socialist states with representatives of capitalist countries and a number of treaties concluded between them, the successful completion of the All-European Conference on Security and Cooperation in Helsinki—all this brought about an important turning point in international relations. Detente was achieved.

Above all one must note the great importance of the ending of the war in Vietnam and the victory of the heroic Vietnamese people, which has removed one of the main obstacles to improving the inter-

national political climate on our planet.

A serious turn towards detente and peace took place in Europe. The many years of struggle for recognition by international law of the territorial changes which took place in Europe as a result of the Second World War and of the inviolability of the state frontiers set up in consequence of these changes were crowned with success.

Supporters of peace have often proclaimed the saving of mankind from a nuclear holocaust as their major task. An extremely important role in achieving this aim is to be played by the Soviet-American agreement on the prevention of nuclear war concluded in 1973. The leading nuclear powers have pledged themselves to act in such a way as to prevent the outbreak of nuclear war between them, and also between each of them and other countries. This fact in itself is of enormous political and moral importance and promotes the struggle of peace-loving forces for the total elimination of the threat of nuclear war.

It is also very important that the conclusion of a number of treaties and agreements on trade, economic and scientific and technological cooperation, etc., with the USA, France, the FRG and other countries opened up the road to broad, mutually advantageous cooperation of socialist states with capitalist countries.

Of fundamental importance were the foreign policy measures directed towards consolidating detente and extending its sphere; supplementing political detente with military detente and practical steps in the sphere of disarmament; placing detente on a firm economic basis; and making international cooperation broad and diverse.

The Peace Programme pursued by the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist community, and the policy of detente and development of cooperation are warmly supported by all peoples and peace-loving democratic forces throughout the world.

A further major contribution to the elaboration of Marxist-Leninist theory of international relations and to realising the main trends of Soviet foreign policy was made by the 25th CPSU Congress, which set the task of continuing attempts to make a stable peace the natural form of life of all peoples in the world. The Congress stressed the importance of the unity and solidarity of the fraternal socialist countries, called for the further strengthening of cooperation between the USSR and the developing countries and for all possible support to peoples struggling for their liberation, and pointed out with new force that in relations with capitalist countries the main factor is the struggle to affirm the principles of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems and to reduce and eventually eliminate the danger of the outbreak of a new world war. The Congress approved the Programme of Further Struggle for Peace and International Cooperation and for the Freedom and Independence of Peoples formulated in Leonid Brezhnev's report. The Congress devoted

considerable attention to problems of the world revolutionary movement. It noted that the main direction of the social progress of mankind is determined by the development of the socialist countries and the enhancing of the beneficial influence of their international policy.

Ruling circles in the West, as was mentioned at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969, have been forced to reckon with new historical conditions and to take into account the change in the alignment of forces in favour of socialism and peace.

However, there still exist forces that act in the spirit of the "cold war", supporting the further build-up of arms and sowing seeds of hatred and mistrust between states. There are such forces in the USA, the FRG and the other Western countries. Moreover, attempts are being made to take advantage of detente in order to employ new, more refined forms of struggle against the consolidation of peace and against the socialist states.

In the struggle against the strengthening of the principles of peaceful coexistence and cooperation the most reactionary, Right-wing extremist, revanchist imperialist circles and Maoists are combining their efforts. On all lines they act as a force that is hostile to the policy and interests of the socialist world, that opposes the course of the socialist states aimed at strengthening international security and counts on the utmost intensification of military preparations and on fanning aggression, as a force that considers hostile activity against the USSR and the other socialist states to be of paramount importance.

The seventies saw the capitalist system gripped by a general crisis of as yet unseen proportions. The world revolutionary process grew in scale and depth, encompassing all the currents of the liberation movement, and various currents of the struggle for a new society free from foreign and social oppression.

Revolutionary change extended to many countries and continents. Fifty-million-strong Vietnam became consolidated as socialism's outpost in Southeast Asia. The people of Laos embarked on the socialist road. The criminal Pol Pot-Ieng Sary regime was deposed in Kampuchea. The Portuguese colonial empire, the last one to survive, collapsed under the onslaught of the national liberation movement and the revolutionary forces in the metropolitan country. Progressive regimes gained a solid footing in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and a few other African countries. Anti-imperialist people's revolutions were seen in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and Iran. Socialist Cuba consolidated its position in the Western Hemisphere. Many nations in Central America and the Caribbean took their destiny into their own hands. The people of Nicaragua embarked on a new life. The liberation movement hit out effectively at colonialism and racism in Southern Africa. Reactionary oppressive regimes gave place to progressive ones, more and more of which have taken the socialist orientation.

The sweeping crisis of capitalism, economic instability and turmoil, the runaway inflation, growing unemployment, shocking political scandals in top echelon, declining public morals, and the increasingly evident inability of the bourgeois state to provide for the security of its citizens—these and other capitalist sores are witnessed on an ever more massive and ominous scale.

As the seventies were drawing to a close, faced by revolutionary upheaval and flux in the young developing countries, the United States began spreading the lie about "Moscow's hand". Certain elements in the United States, who see detente as an obstacle to their aggressive plans, to their policy of blackmail and intimidation, to their *diktat*, and to their imperialist claims to world supremacy, are trying to turn the clock back to the "cold war" times. At the May 1978 session of the NATO Council in Washington, they imposed on other NATO members an automatic annual boost of military expenditure until the end of the century. Stepping up pressure on their allies and dragging them onto the perilous road of militarism, the rulers of the United States have launched new long-term arms programmes, and are expanding their network of military bases in various parts of the world. They have activated a so-called rapid deployment force, which is to be Washington's tool for armed interference in the affairs of independent states.

US President Carter, who set out to torpedo detente, has indefinitely deferred the Senate debate on the SALT-2 Treaty, which, if it were ratified, would open the doors to major moves in the field of disarmament. The situation in Europe and the rest of the world was most unfavourably affected by the NATO decision to deploy new medium-range nuclear missiles and projectiles in a number of West European countries, adopted under strong US pressure and leading to a new spiral of the arms race. This is complicating disarmament talks.

In a bid to camouflage its efforts to torpedo detente, Washington has, with the active assistance of the Peking hegemonists, mounted an unprecedentedly vicious anti-Soviet campaign over the events in Afghanistan. The scale of this specious and hypocritical campaign exposes its instigators, whose plans to rob Afghanistan of its independence and to make it an imperialist military bridgehead on the southern border of the Soviet Union, were frustrated by the timely Soviet aid rendered at the request of the Afghan government.

The Soviet Union has shown more than once that it can stand up for itself, and for its allies and friends. The USSR and the other fraternal socialist countries in the Warsaw Treaty Organisation are determined to safeguard all the positive things gained over the years by the collective efforts of states in consolidating international security and peaceful co-operation, especially in Europe. They know that the detente policy has deep roots and is backed by powerful forces. This means that despite the designs of the foes of peace,

detente has every chance of remaining the leading trend in international relations. "The Soviet people and our friends abroad," Leonid Brezhnev has stressed, "can rest assured that the Leninist course of our foreign policy is not subject to change. It was set by the decisions of the CPSU congresses, and is being implemented in all our external political activity. It combines peaceful intentions and a firm stand against aggression. It has justified itself during the past few decades, and we shall continue to adhere to it. Nothing and nobody can push us off this course."[16]

At a time when new opportunities are opening up for strengthening the cause of peace and for the advance of the forces of socialism and democracy, a time when new dangers are arising in view of the activity of reactionary imperialist forces and the Peking leaders who are allying with them, the course of strengthening the solidarity of the socialist community, the international communist movement and all peace-loving democratic forces, a course unswervingly followed by the CPSU, acquires even greater importance than before.

Both the theoretical principles of the foreign policy of the USSR and its implementation by the Soviet state are a most valuable ideological possession of the working-class and democratic movement and the whole of progressive mankind. Soviet foreign policy experience has helped the other socialist countries, which embarked upon the path of socialism later than the Soviet Union, to develop their own foreign policy. As the facts show, it is arousing the keenest interest in the working class of capitalist countries also. No less interest is to be observed in the young countries which have recently liberated themselves form colonial rule and created their own state and are now forming their own foreign policy line. This is understandable, since both the working class of the capitalist countries and the peoples struggling against imperialism have their best friend in the Soviet Union. Its foreign policy has rendered direct assistance to many of these countries. Moreover, it defends the great moral and political values which are close to the heart of every politically conscious worker and every fighter for national freedom, peace, security, national independence, and the freedom and equality of all nations.

People should know not only how foreign policy is being pursued today, but also the whole of its past: history helps us to understand the present day more profoundly. This book aims at providing the reader with a deeper understanding of the foreign policy of the USSR. It also aims at explaining this policy abroad. The better and more correctly Soviet policy is understood, the more friends it will acquire.

[16] *Pravda*, 13 January 1980.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST FOREIGN POLICY ACTS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

The Struggle of the Soviet Government for a General Democratic Peace

The Great October Socialist Revolution took place during the First World War, when Russia together with Britain, France, the USA and other countries was fighting against Germany and its allies.

On coming to power the Bolsheviks launched an active campaign to put into practice their appeals to end the imperialist war. To make use of all means and possibilities in order to conclude a general and democratic peace—this was the task set by the Bolshevik Party. And in this the Party was ardently supported by millions of working people.

Peace was essential in order to consolidate the gains of the socialist revolution, to bring about transformations in town and countryside, and to strengthen the alliance of the working class and the toiling peasantry. Continuation of the war threatened the cause of revolution and put the very existence of Russia in mortal danger. The country's economy was ruined, and by the end of 1917 the army had lost all ability to fight.

At the time the international situation to a certain extent favoured the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia and the setting up there of new, workers' and peasants' power in the form of Soviets. The imperialist world was divided into two hostile groups of powers engaged in mortal combat. The main burden of the war was borne by the working masses. Therefore in the countries of both of the belligerent coalitions the discontent of the masses with the war was maturing and expressing itself in active anti-war demonstrations. In such conditions it was difficult for both Germany and the Entente to find the strength to fulfil the innermost desire of the ruling classes of all the imperialist countries: to crush the Russian revolution and, as Churchill put it, to strangle communism in its cradle.

The war between the two blocs of imperialist powers prevented them from creating a united front against Soviet Russia. As a result the Soviet government was able to consolidate the world's first socialist state.

The very next day after the victory of the October Revolution the Bolsheviks announced clearly and firmly their intention to conclude a general peace.

On October 26 (November 8), 1917 the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets adopted the Decree on Peace, in which the Soviet

state called upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start negotiations for a just, immediate, democratic peace. This fine document was drafted by Lenin. "The fight for peace is on," Lenin said. "It will be an uphill fight. International imperialism is mobilising all its forces against us."[1]

It is highly significant for the nature of the new, socialist state that its first foreign policy act was devoted to the struggle for peace. The Decree on Peace embodied an entirely new foreign policy and diplomacy, fundamentally different from the foreign policy and diplomacy of the exploiting classes.

First and foremost, the way in which the Soviet government addressed its peace proposal was new: the Decree was addressed not only to the governments but also to the peoples of the two belligerent groups and, in particular, to the progressive, class-conscious workers of Great Britain, France and Germany. This form of address was a break with diplomatic tradition. It provided broad possibilities for informing the whole world about the Soviet peace platform. It was a call to the masses to take a direct part in the fight for peace.

In this historic document the government of Soviet Russia firmly condemned the imperialist war. "The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity," the Decree reads, "to continue this war over the issue of how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered, and solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign terms of peace to stop this war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception."[2]

In the Decree on Peace Lenin clearly defined what sort of peace the Soviet government recognised as just and democratic: "Peace without annexations (i.e., without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities." The Decree stated clearly what was understood by annexation: "In accordance with the sense of justice of democrats in general, and of the working classes in particular, the government conceives the annexation or seizure of foreign lands to mean every incorporation of a small or weak nation into a large or powerful state without the precisely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time when such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective also of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to the given state, or forcibly retained within its borders, and irrespective, finally, of whether this nation is in Europe or in distant, overseas countries."[3]

This definition of annexation contains a number of basic proposi-

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, Moscow, 1964, p. 316.

[2] Ibid., p. 250.

[3] Ibid., pp. 249-50.

tions of the new, socialist foreign policy: here we find a total rejection of all forms of aggression, the principle of the self-determination of nations, a condemnation of colonialism and the demand for equality of large and small peoples.

Proposing peace on these terms Lenin announced from the platform of the Second Congress of Soviets that the Soviet government did not regard its peace proposals as an ultimatum. It was prepared to consider any other peace terms and insisted only that they should be advanced as speedily as possible, that they should be absolutely clear and that there should be no secret diplomacy during their discussion.

The Decree on Peace and, particularly, the readiness which it expressed to discuss any peace terms, reflected the Leninist idea of the possibility of peaceful coexistence of states belonging to different social systems and the settlement of relations between them by means of negotiation. Speaking at the Second Congress of Soviets, Lenin said: "We reject all clauses on plunder and violence, but we shall welcome all clauses containing provisions for good-neighbourly relations and all economic agreements; we cannot reject these."[4]

These words of the leader of the revolution testify to the intention of Soviet power to maintain normal relations with capitalist countries.

The Decree on Peace proposed the conclusion of an armistice for a period of not less than three months to permit all countries to prepare for peace negotiations.

The young Soviet Republic was the first and only state to advance a programme for a just peace without annexations and indemnities. The Decree on Peace was a new word in the history of the relations between states. The radio and press spread this word throughout the world. This historic document marked the birth of a new foreign policy, the policy of a socialist state.

On November 7 (20), 1917 the Soviet government sent instructions to the General Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the army, General Dukhonin, ordering him to propose directly to the command of the enemy armies the immediate and mutual cessation of the military operations.

On November 8 (21), the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs sent a Note to the Ambassadors of the Allied Powers. Appending the text of the Decree on Peace to the note, the Commissariat requested them to regard it as "a formal proposal for an immediate armistice on all the fronts and for the immediate opening of peace talks, a proposal that the authorised Government of the Russian Republic submits simultaneously to all the belligerent peoples and their Governments."[5]

[4] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 255.

[5] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1957, p. 17 (in Russian).

No reply to the Soviet government's wireless message was received from Dukhonin. In view of this, in the early hours of November 9 (22) Lenin asked Dukhonin over a direct line about the reasons for the delay in replying.

At first Dukhonin tried to avoid giving an explanation. But Lenin put the question to him directly: "Do you flatly refuse to give us a precise reply and carry out our orders?"[6] Dukhonin replied with a refusal.

Lenin immediately dismissed him from his post for disobeying the orders of the Soviet government. Ensign N. V. Krylenko, a prominent figure in the Revolution, was appointed Commander-in-Chief.

On the morning of November 9 (22), Lenin on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars sent a wireless message to the army and navy. Describing the course of the negotiations with the counter-revolutionary General Headquarters, he called upon the soldiers to take the conduct of negotiations into their own hands over the heads of their command and to elect representatives in the regiments who would enter into formal armistice negotiations with the enemy. It was proposed that the Council of People's Commissars should be informed of all steps taken. The Council of People's Commissars reserved the right to sign the final armistice agreement.

In addressing itself to the soldiers, the Bolshevik Party was handing over such an important matter as the conclusion of peace to the working people themselves. This was an unprecedented phenomenon. It reflected the profoundly popular and democratic nature of the new, revolutionary power created in Russia.

The imperialist governments of the Entente powers ignored the Soviet government's proposals for a democratic peace. They sought to prevent Russia's withdrawal from the war, although they knew full well that it could no longer fight. Throughout the war Russia had engaged considerable forces of the German bloc, and at the tensest moments more than half the enemy's forces were on the Eastern front. Russia's fulfilment of its obligations to its Allies had led to the total exhaustion of all its resources. But the "Allies" were not interested in Russia's situation. They regarded it as a supplier of cannon fodder.

The Entente representatives in Petrograd, who had kept silent up to that moment, now openly opposed Soviet power.

On November 9 (22) the diplomatic representatives of the Allied powers gathered for a meeting with the US Ambassador, David R. Francis, at which they worked out a common line of conduct with respect to the Soviet government. They decided not to reply to the Soviet Note of November 8 (21) and not to enter into any contacts with the Soviet government. These were boycott tactics, which meant

[6] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 310.

that the Entente powers had adopted a policy of struggle against Soviet power. The next day, November 10 (23), the heads of the foreign military missions at General Headquarters, at the request of their governments protested against the violation of the treaty of August 23 (September 5), 1914 concluded between tsarist Russia, Britain and France, by which the Allies undertook not to conclude an armistice except by common consent. The Entente military representatives threatened that "any violation of the treaty by Russia would have the most serious consequences".[7]

The Note was signed by the heads of the British, French, Japanese, Italian and Romanian military missions at General Headquarters. On November 14 (27) similar action was taken by the military representative of the USA. He also informed Dukhonin that the government of the USA "definitely and energetically protests against any separate armistice that might be signed by Russia".[8]

The action of the military representatives of the Allied powers in addressing themselves to General Dukhonin, who had already been dismissed by Soviet power, was open incitement to disobey the orders of the Soviet government, illegal and flagrant intervention in the internal affairs of Russia.

At the same time it was an attempt to prevent the cessation of military operations on the Eastern front. The Entente powers and the USA not only refused to take part in peace negotiations, but also from the very outset began active preparations for a struggle to overthrow Soviet power in Russia. They hoped that with their assistance the Russian counter-revolutionaries would overthrow Soviet power and set up a bourgeois government again. They began preparing for this immediately after the October Revolution—in November 1917. The Entente's counter-revolutionary intervention was hampered only by lack of forces and resources which had been devoured by the war against Germany.

Although the government of Kaiser Germany was just as bitter an enemy of the Soviet country as the governments of the Entente, it reacted differently to the Soviet proposal to start negotiations for an armistice and peace.

The actions of Germany and its allies were based on economic and political factors. The exhaustion of the resources of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey had assumed threatening proportions. German ruling circles hoped to relieve the situation by concluding a separate peace with Russia which would put an end to the need to fight on two fronts and would release manpower for widespread offensive operations on the Western front planned by the German command for the summer of 1918.

[7] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 25.

[8] Ibid., p. 33.

The German imperialists dreaded the influence of the Russian revolution on Germany and its army. Leading representatives of German imperialism nursed the idea of striking a crippling blow at revolutionary Russia. However they obviously lacked the forces for a large and lengthy campaign in 1918: a large part of their forces was engaged on the Western front. General Max Hoffmann, the Chief of Staff of the Eastern front, was forced to admit this.[9]

Nor could the German imperialists fail to take into account the anti-war sentiments of the German people and army, which sometimes took the form of open demonstrations against the existing system (such as, for example, the naval mutiny in 1917). Bearing in mind the desire of the mass of the German people for peace, the Right-wing Social-Democrats were compelled to support the demand for the conclusion of peace with Soviet Russia. On November 14 (27) the German government announced its agreement to the opening of armistice negotiations. Their conduct was entrusted to the Commander-in-Chief of the German forces on the Eastern front.

On receiving this answer, the Soviet government made a fresh attempt to conclude not only a Russo-German, but also a general peace. It proposed to the Germans that the opening of negotiations be postponed for five days in order to invite the Entente governments once more to take part in them. On November 15 (28) the Soviet government again appealed to the governments and peoples of the belligerent countries urging them to join in the peace negotiations. "A decisive step has been taken. The victorious Workers' and Peasants' Revolution in Russia has put the question of peace point-blank.... Today all the governments, all the classes and all the parties of the belligerent countries are called upon to answer categorically the question: are they prepared to join with us on November 19 (December 2) in negotiations on an immediate armistice and general peace? Yes or no?"[10] Further it was stated: "If the Allied peoples do not send their representatives, we shall alone conduct the negotiations with the Germans. But if the bourgeoisie of the Allied countries forces us to sign a separate peace, it shall bear the full responsibility."[11]

The governments of the Entente countries and the USA again did not reply to the Soviet peace proposals. In a communication to the British Ambassador on November 16 (29) the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs stressed that the "Soviet government wants a general and not a separate peace".[12] Informing the Allied governments of the forthcoming negotiations the Foreign Commissariat announced on November 17 (30) that "now as before the Council of

[9] M. Hoffmann, *Notes and Diaries, 1917-1918*, Leningrad, 1929, p. 101 (in Russian).

[10] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 28-29.

[11] Ibid., p. 30.

[12] Ibid., p. 31.

People's Commissars regards as essential the simultaneous conduct of negotiations together with all the Allies with the aim of concluding an immediate armistice on all fronts and of ensuring a general democratic peace".[13]

Because the Entente powers sabotaged the opening of the armistice negotiations, Soviet Russia was compelled to begin them alone. To this end a Soviet delegation was sent to Brest-Litovsk which the German side had suggested as the place for holding the negotiations (the command of the German troops on the Eastern front was situated in this town at the time). The delegation was led by A. A. Joffe and military experts were attached to it. The German delegation was led by General M. Hoffmann.

The negotiations began on November 20 (December 3), 1917. The Soviet delegation presented draft terms for an armistice agreement. It was proposed to conclude it for six months. The demarcation line was to run in the middle between the positions of the two belligerent parties held at the time of the opening of the negotiations, and on the Baltic from Cape Mozeret to the southern tip of the Island of Gotland and from there up to the Swedish territorial waters. The Germans were to withdraw from the Moonzund Islands. The transfer of troops from the Eastern to the Western front was forbidden.

While compelled to begin separate negotiations with Germany and its allies, Soviet Russia continued its efforts to bring all the participants in the war into the negotiations, in order to save all mankind from a continuation of the bloody carnage. The Soviet demand that troops should not be transferred from the Eastern to the Western front showed that Soviet power was fighting for a general peace and did not intend to let one group of imperialists better its position at the expense of another.

This demand was immediately rejected by the Germans. Hoffmann announced that it was unacceptable. He said that such terms "could be proposed only to a defeated nation".

The Soviet side declared that there must be an armistice on all fronts with the aim of ensuring a general democratic peace. Hoffmann objected that he was authorised to carry on negotiations with Russian representatives only.

The Soviet delegation communicated the Germans' reply to the government in Petrograd which instructed them not to give way on the question of forbidding the transfer of troops to the West and to demand the suspension of the negotiations.

On November 22 (December 5) it was agreed to cease military operations for ten days and to suspend the armistice negotiations for the same period. Moreover, in response to the insistence of the Soviet delegation, Hoffmann undertook not to transfer any German troops

[13] Ibid., p. 32.

from the Eastern to the Western front during the suspension of the conference.

On November 23 (December 6) the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs published another appeal to the Allied Ambassadors on the question of an armistice. After informing them in detail about the course of the negotiations and pointing out that the Soviet delegation had insisted on the banning of troop transfers from one front to the other, and also on the withdrawal of German troops from the Moonzund Islands, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs suggested that the Entente countries should define their attitude to the peace negotiations, i.e., express "their willingness or unwillingness to take part in the negotiations for an armistice and peace and, in the event they are unwilling, to tell the whole of mankind clearly, precisely and definitely the aims for which the peoples of Europe have to shed their blood in the course of the fourth year of war".[14]

The Entente powers and the USA did not reply to this appeal either, thus demonstrating once again their unwillingness to begin negotiations on the conclusion of a general democratic peace.

At the end of the ten-day interval the negotiations were resumed. On December 2 (15), 1917 an agreement on a 28-day armistice was signed between the Soviet Russia, on the one hand, and Germany and its allies, on the other. Both sides agreed to give each other seven days warning of the resumption of military operations in the event of the agreement being broken. Soviet diplomacy had achieved a major triumph: the Germans gave way on one of the most important questions—they agreed not to transfer troops from the Eastern to the Western front.

Even after the conclusion of the armistice the Soviet government continued its efforts to draw all the belligerent powers into the peace negotiations. It again addressed itself to the peoples of the belligerent European countries. December 5 (18) saw the publication of the appeal "To the Working and Oppressed Peoples of Europe Who Have Been Bled White". The Council of People's Commissars announced the conclusion of an armistice on the Eastern front and urged all working people to a joint struggle for an immediate cessation of the war on all fronts.

On December 8 (21) a joint meeting was held of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Council of People's Commissars, the Second All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies, the Petrograd City and District Soviets, and representatives of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and trade union organisations. At the meeting the appeal "To the Working Masses of All Countries" was adopted which said in part: "Only the will of the peoples will compel the imperialists of all countries to sign

[14] Ibid., p. 42.

a democratic peace.... Alone, we, the representatives of the working masses of Russia, cannot give you general peace. You are called upon to demand that your representatives should likewise take part in the negotiations."[15]

The repeated proposals of the Soviet government show that it did everything possible to draw all the participants in the war into the peace negotiations. But the governments of the Entente and the USA ignored the interests of the peoples. To please their ruling classes they continued the war. They bore the heavy responsibility for the hundreds of thousands of human sacrifices caused by the prolongation of the First World War.

The imperialist governments of the Entente countries and the USA were, however, bound to take into account the anti-war mood of the broad mass of the people in their countries. This mood grew even stronger under the influence of the Soviet programme for the immediate cessation of the war and the conclusion of a general democratic peace without annexations and indemnities, which was set out in Lenin's Decree on Peace and the proposals for the opening of negotiations on the conclusion of a general peace.

Soviet Russia's Struggle for the Peoples' Liberation

From its very inception the Soviet state has acted as the champion of the freedom and independence of all peoples, large and small. The Decree on Peace proclaimed the right of all peoples to self-determination. In it the Soviet government also announced its intention to publish the secret treaties concluded by tsarist Russia and the Provisional Government with other capitalist states, confirming the Soviet government's renunciation of secret diplomacy and its determination to expose to the peoples the criminal, aggressive plans of the main imperialist powers.

Seven volumes appeared in all, containing the texts of the predatory treaties concluded by the imperialists. They were published under the guidance of a member of the Petrograd Revolutionary Military Committee, a sailor by the name of N. G. Markin, who was helped by Red Guards and workers sent to work in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. More than a hundred secret diplomatic documents of imperialist governments were made public. The working people learnt the truth about the shameful bargains, as a result of which the imperialist powers had enslaved whole peoples and divided up whole countries.

November 2 (15), 1917 saw the publication of the "Declaration

[15] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 58-59.

of Rights of the Peoples of Russia", which set out a concrete programme of liberation for the oppressed peoples of tsarist Russia and proclaimed the basic principles of the nationalities policy of Soviet power:

"1. Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.

"2. The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination up to secession and the formation of an independent state.

"3. Abrogation of all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions.

"4. The free development of the national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia."[16]

The Soviet government held up to shame the bourgeois-landowner policy of setting the oppressed peoples against one another, a policy of national enmity. The workers' and peasants' government did away with all national oppression, proclaimed the freedom and equality of all peoples, and adopted the policy of equal rights for all nationalities which ensured the mutual trust of the peoples of Russia. "Only as a result of such trust," the Declaration stated, "can a sincere and lasting alliance of the peoples of Russia be formed.

"Only as a result of such an alliance can the workers and peasants throughout Russia be welded into a revolutionary force able to withstand any encroachment of the imperialist-annexationist bourgeoisie."[17]

Soviet Russia recognised Poland and Finland as independent states. On 18 (31) December 1917 the Council of People's Commissars passed a decree granting independence to Finland. During the Council sitting in the Smolny Lenin personally handed the text of the decree to P. E. Svinhufvud, the Prime Minister of Finland heading the Finnish government delegation. It read:

"a) to recognise the Finnish Republic as an independent state, "and b) to organise, by agreement with the Finnish government, a special commission of representatives of both sides to work out the practical measures that follow from Finland's secession from Russia."

This decree was approved by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on December 22, 1917 (January 4, 1918) and the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets on January 15 (28), 1918.[18]

The right to self-determination was also acquired by all the other peoples inhabiting Russia, in particular, by the peoples of the Baltic countries—Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. On December 7, 1918 the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR issued a decree signed by Lenin on the recognition of the independence of the Estonian

[16] Ibid., p. 15.

[17] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

[18] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, Notes, p. 571, Note 155; *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 71.

Soviet Republic. On December 22 Lenin signed similar decrees concerning the Soviet Republic of Latvia and the Lithuanian Soviet Republic. On December 24 the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, proceeding from the principle of the full and real self-determination of the peoples of oppressed nationalities, solemnly approved the decrees of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR on the recognition of the independence of the Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The Soviet government also sought to ensure the independence of the Armenian people. On December 29, 1917 (January 11, 1918) the Council of People's Commissars passed a decree on supporting the right of the Armenians of Turkish Armenia, which had been occupied by Russian troops during the First World War, to free self-determination up to and including complete independence. The Armenians of Russian Armenia were also granted this right by the "Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia". On January 15 (28), 1918 the decree was approved by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets.

The Great October Socialist Revolution roused all the oppressed peoples of the East. The imperialists, who had been robbing these peoples mercilessly for centuries, had good reason to fear that the liberation of the peoples of Russia, announced by the Soviet government, would strengthen the national liberation movement in all the oppressed countries.

On November 20 (December 3), 1917 the Soviet government addressed an appeal to the working Moslems of Russia and the East. After setting out the basic principles of its policy, it assured the working Moslems of Russia: "From now on your faiths and customs, your national and cultural institutions are declared free and inviolable. Arrange your national life freely and without hindrance. You have the right to this. Know that your rights, like those of all the other peoples of Russia, are protected by the might of the revolution and its organs the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies."[19]

The appeal also spoke of the annulment and liquidation of the secret treaties concluded by tsarist Russia with other imperialist powers, in particular on the division of Turkey and Iran. "Troops will be withdrawn from Persia as soon as military operations stop and the Persians will be ensured the right freely to decide their destiny.... Enslavement awaits you not at the hands of Russia and its revolutionary government, but at the hands of the predators of European imperialism, of those who have turned your homeland into a 'colony', which they are looting and robbing."

The appeal ended with the words:

"Comrades! Brothers!

[19] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 34.

"We are advancing towards an honest, democratic peace firmly and resolutely.

"On our banners we bring liberation to the oppressed peoples of the world."[20]

This document expressed the basic principles of the policy of the Soviet state in relation to all oppressed peoples. Soviet Russia not only announced that it would base its relations with all oppressed peoples on equality, but also declared its readiness to render them fraternal assistance in their struggle for liberation.

On December 19, 1917 (January 1, 1918) the Soviet government informed the Iranian government that it was ready to discuss the question of the withdrawal of Russian troops form Iranian territory.[21] A few days later the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs announced that, without waiting for joint agreement, Russian troops which "have no significance from the military standpoint and served only as an occupation force on Persian territory", would be immediately withdrawn.[22]

On January 14 (27), 1918 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs sent a Note to the Iranian envoy in Petrograd which officially declared the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907, "as one which is aimed against the freedom and independence of the Persian people, annulled once and for all."[23] The Note also recognised as null and void all agreements prior to that of 1907 as well as all those after it,[24] which "in any way limit or restrict the Persian people's rights to freedom and independence", and expressed readiness to do everything possible to ensure that Turkish and British troops were likewise withdrawn from Iran.[25]

The Note was published in the Soviet press and made a great impression throughout the world. It was a blow to colonialism. The Iranian people rejoiced. "Teheran has been virtually shaken by an explosion of general jubilation," announced the Soviet diplomatic representative. "I do not have a free moment from the endless stream of deputations and individuals that greet me. I am given ovations even in the streets."[26]

On behalf of the Iranian government its chargé d'affaires in Petro-

[20] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 35.

[21] Ibid., p. 72.

[22] Ibid., p. 73.

[23] Ibid., p. 91.

[24] During the First World War the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was supplemented in 1915 by a new, secret agreement by which, in return for ceding Constantinople and the Straits to tsarist Russia, Britain was to receive almost the whole "neutral" zone of Iran which covered the central regions of the country.

[25] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 92.

[26] Ibid., p. 713.

grad, in a Note of January 17 (30), 1918, expressed gratitude to Soviet Russia for its act of justice. The Iranian government, having taken into consideration the Soviet government's decision on the annulment of the Anglo-Russian agreement, in its turn declared "as null and void all the treaties and agreements forced upon Persia or which contravened the principle of its independence and inviolability".[27] This meant, therefore, the annulment by Iran of unequal treaties not only with tsarist Russia, but also with all the other imperialist powers. The Great Socialist Revolution in Russia enabled Iran after many decades of oppression to speak out as a sovereign and equal state. The Iranian government declared its readiness to enter into negotiations with the Land of Soviets on the conclusion of new treaties based "on the principles of free agreement and mutual respect of peoples".[28]

The Soviet state sought to establish new relations, based on the principle of equal rights, with China, Russia's great neighbour. All the documents with an invitation to take part in the peace negotiations, and primarily the Decree on Peace, were sent to the Chinese mission in Petrograd. At the end of November 1917 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs informed the Chinese government that the former Russian envoy to China and the Head of the Chinese Eastern Railway had been dismissed from their posts. The Commissariat suggested the setting up of a "joint Russo-Chinese Liquidation Commission for the Chinese Eastern Railway".[29]

Soviet consular representatives to China were appointed. At the Territorial Soviets in Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, Chita, Irkutsk, Omsk and Tashkent international departments were set up for the general management of all questions concerning frontier relations. The instructions to these departments, issued by the Commissariat, stated: "Use every convenient opportunity to stress in the press, at rallies and in leaflets that we are laying the foundation stone for the creation of completely new relations with the peoples of the East and that their salvation from the threat of conquest, violence and lawlessness by the Japanese-European capitalists and oppressors lies in close unity with the peoples of socialist Russia."[30]

The Creation of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs

The new, socialist foreign policy required a new diplomatic apparatus. Its organisation was a matter of urgency, the more so because of

[27] Ibid., p. 93.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., p. 47.
[30] Ibid., p. 111.

the impending peace negotiations with Germany and its allies, which were of the utmost importance.

One of the means of fighting the people's power employed by the overthrown classes was sabotage by civil service employees. The staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also had recourse to sabotage.

But the enemies of the revolution had miscalculated. The new power set about destroying the old, exploitatory state apparatus. The old ministries were abolished and new organs of state power, People's Commissariats, set up.

The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs was formed in accordance with a decree of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets "On the Institution of the Council of People's Commissars" passed on October 26 (November 8), 1917. In the 1918 Constitution of the RSFSR, Article 43, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs headed the list of eighteen people's commissariats. The former manager of the Council of People's Commissars, V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, stressing the urgent need to set up the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, wrote: "The first commissariat that we ... organised was the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, which events forced us to do."[31] V. I. Lenin, who had always given much of his time to foreign policy matters and personally supervised the activities of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, stressed the importance of personnel selection. The staff of the Commissariat was formed from old members of the Bolshevik Party, who had played an active part in the international working-class movement and had considerable political experience. Many of them had spent long years in emigration and had the opportunity of acquainting themselves with the situation in various countries and of studying foreign languages and international relations. The staff of the Commissariat also included Bolshevik workers and sailors, as, for example, N. G. Markin.

Lenin repeatedly remarked on the special character of this Commissariat's apparatus: "This apparatus," Lenin wrote, "is an exceptional component of our state apparatus. We have not allowed a single influential person from the old tsarist apparatus into it. All sections with any authority are composed of Communists. That is why it has already won for itself (this may be said boldly) the name of a reliable communist apparatus...."[32]

Lenin himself selected the administrative personnel of the Commissariat and played a large part personally in its work. He not only took part in defining the general line of foreign policy as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and in approving the drafts of the different documents presented by the Commissariat but also perso-

[31] V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, *At the Combat Posts of the February and October Revolutions*, Moscow, 1930, p. 133 (in Russian).

[32] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, Moscow, 1966, p. 609.

nally drafted many notes and other foreign policy documents, edited important drafts from the Commissariat, and conducted the most important negotiations with foreign representatives.

In accordance with Lenin's instructions, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) devoted considerable attention to examining the Commissariat's proposals on major questions of international politics and the proposed actions of Soviet diplomacy. This explains why Lenin said that "the Foreign Commissariat is working under the direct guidance of our Central Committee".[33]

In January 1918 G. V. Chicherin was appointed Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, but in effect he became the head of the Commissariat. The formal People's Commissar, Trotsky, was at the peace conference in Brest-Litovsk most of the time, and after his treacherous disobeying of the Central Committee's directive on the immediate signing of a treaty at the beginning of March 1918 he was relieved of the duties of People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. On May 30, 1918 Chicherin was appointed People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. By then he had already shown himself to be an excellent worker. This is precisely how Lenin described him. "Chicherin," Lenin wrote on July 1, 1918, "is a splendid, conscientious, clever and knowledgeable worker. Such people should be appreciated."[34]

In March 1918 L. M. Karakhan, who had started diplomatic work in November 1917, was appointed Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. He was a member of the delegation which signed the Brest Peace Treaty.

In the very first few days of Soviet power the question of organising the representation of the Soviet state abroad arose. As a rule the old ambassadors and envoys joined in the active struggle against Soviet power.

With the aim of putting an end to the counter-revolutionary activity of the Russian embassies and missions the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on November 22 (December 5), 1917 telegraphed all the personnel of embassies, missions and consulates asking them to inform it immediately whether they agreed to conduct the foreign policy of the Soviet government. In the event of their refusing they were instructed to hand over their duties to officials of lower rank who agreed to obey Soviet power.[35] As was to be expected, the representatives of the old government did not obey the Commissariat. Exceptions were the Chargé d'Affaires in Portugal

[33] Ibid., Vol. 42, Moscow, 1969, p. 438.

[34] *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*, p. 54. For more about Chicherin, see I. Gorokhov, L. Zamyatin and I. Zemskov, *G. V. Chicherin Was a Diplomat of the Leninist School*, Moscow, 1973 (in Russian).

[35] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 41.

Ungern-Sternberg and the acting Chargé d'Affaires in Spain Y. Y. Solovyov. But their telegrams to Petrograd were not let through, and they themselves were subjected to victimisation and persecution.[36]

On November 26 (December 9), 1917 the Commissariat issued an order on the dismissal of 28 ambassadors, envoys and embassy officials. The dismissed persons were forbidden to make any payment from state funds.[37] Neither the dismissed diplomats, nor the foreign powers obeyed this order. The former ambassadors continued to take part in the struggle against Soviet power, and the foreign governments, contrary to all international practice and custom, regarded them as before as Russia's official representatives. For example, the USA regarded Bakhmetiev as Russian Ambassador right up to 1922, although the Soviet government appointed L. K. Martens as its official representative in the USA in January 1919.

On November 19 (December 2), 1917 V. V. Vorovsky, who was in Stockholm at the time, was appointed the official representative of Soviet Russia in Sweden, Denmark and Norway. Stockholm was chosen as the permanent residence of the Soviet representative in the three afore-mentioned countries. In January 1918 M. M. Litvinov was appointed official representative in Britain. L. B. Krasin performed important diplomatic tasks from the middle of 1918. However, the capitalist states refused to recognise the Soviet government officially. Consequently they did not recognise its representatives either.

V. I. Lenin reviewed the work of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in detail and took part in solving many problems related to its organisation and structure.

On June 30, 1918 Lenin held consultations with G. V. Chicherin and V. V. Vorovsky at the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. At this meeting the Rules of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs were adopted. These Rules determined both its organisation and the work of the Soviet plenipotentiary representatives abroad.

On October 18, 1918 a decree of the Council of People's Commissars, signed by Lenin and Karakhan, was issued instituting Consulates, which also laid down the procedure for appointing Consular representatives: General Consuls and Consuls. The decree gave the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs the right to appoint them.[38]

Later, the functions of the Commissariat were defined in the Rules and Regulations on the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs approved by the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR on June 6, 1921. These Rules and Regulations and a number of subse-

[36] S. Y. Vygodsky, *V. I. Lenin, Leader of the Soviet State's Foreign Policy (1917-1923)*, Leningrad, 1960, p. 47 (in Russian).

[37] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 43-44

[38] *Collected Statutes and Orders of the Workers' and Peasants' Government*, No. 78, 1918, p. 823 (in Russian).

quent acts perfected the organisation of the Commissariat.[39]

An exceptionally important role in establishing the sovereignty and independence of the Soviet state and liberating the working people of Russia from the financial bondage to international capital was played by the nationalisation of private banks and the turning of banking into a state monopoly, and also by the decree annulling all state and foreign loans, issued on February 10, 1918 by the Soviet government. In response to this perfectly lawful act the foreign diplomatic representatives on behalf of their governments declared that they "consider all decrees ... on the annulment of state loans ... in so far as they affect the interests of foreign subjects, as non-existent".[40]

A decree of the Council of People's Commissars of April 22, 1918 nationalised foreign trade and turned it into a state monopoly. Foreign trade has since become one of the most important instruments in the building of the socialist economy. The decree dealt a severe blow at the Russian and foreign bourgeoisie, which was seeking to make use of foreign trade in order to undermine the economy of Soviet Russia already devastated by the war.

These measures deprived the foreign bourgeoisie of key factors which had enabled it to exert pressure on the Soviet state. At the same time the latter acquired an additional weapon in its struggle for recognition, for an end to the political isolation and economic blockade which the Western powers were pursuing in respect of Soviet Russia.

A new apparatus was set up to handle foreign trade. A foreign trade department was organised in the People's Commisariat for Trade and Industry. All export and import licenses were issued exclusively by this department.

On March 31, 1918 the Foreign Trade Commission of the Supreme Economic Council (SEC) was formed with V. I. Lenin, G. I. Lomov and V. P. Milyutin among its members. A major role in the study of questions of the general foreign trade policy of the Soviet state was played by L. B. Krasin, who became a member of the Presidium of the SEC in August 1918 and supervised the activities of all the foreign economic bodies and institutions. In November 1918 Krasin became head of the People's Commissariat for Trade and Industry, which existed until the end of December 1919. On December 28, 1919, when the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade of the RSFSR was set up, Krasin was put in charge of this commissariat.

[39] In accordance with Article 77 of the 1936 Constitution of the USSR, by a decree of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of December 13, 1936, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs was renamed People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR. By a law of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of March 15, 1946, the People's Commissariats of the USSR were renamed Ministries. The Foreign Commissariat thus became the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

[40] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 98.

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The Soviet state began its existence with the promulgation of the historic Decree on Peace. This marked the start of the struggle of the Soviet country for a general, democratic peace, a peace without annexations and indemnities, for the cessation of the war and the establishment of peaceful relations between socialist Russia and the capitalist countries. The peace proposals presented by the Soviet government headed by Lenin confirm that in its practical activity it proceeded from the possibility of peaceful relations between the Soviet socialist state and the states of the capitalist system.

In spite of the sabotage of the Soviet peace proposals by the Entente powers and the USA it continued an active struggle to end the war as soon as possible.

The armistice negotiations and later the armistice agreement between Soviet Russia and the powers of the German bloc showed the peoples of all the belligerent countries the way to a rapid ending of the war. The conclusion of the armistice promoted the growth of anti-war and revolutionary sentiments among the working masses of all the countries that were fighting in the war, first and foremost, among the German people.

The struggle of the Soviet state for a democratic peace was at the same time a struggle for the liberation of the peoples. This aim was also served by the proclamation of the right of all the peoples of Russia to self-determination up to and including secession and the formation of independent states. The publication of the "Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia" and its implementation were of tremendous importance for the development of the national liberation movement throughout the world.

The new principles of socialist foreign policy found concrete expression in relations with the countries of Asia. The Soviet government annulled the unequal treaties with the countries of the East and expressed its willingness to establish relations with them based on equal rights and to render them fraternal assistance in achieving complete liberation.

CHAPTER II

THE BREST-LITOVSK NEGOTIATIONS AND PEACE TREATY

The First Stage of the Peace Negotiations

The Entente powers and the USA continued to sabotage Soviet Russia's peace proposals. The Soviet government was compelled to start separate peace negotiations with Germany and its allies: Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey.

The peace negotiations, just as the armistice negotiations, took place in Brest-Litovsk. They opened on December 9 (22), 1917.

The Soviet delegation was led by A. A. Joffe. The head of the German delegation was D. von Kühlmann, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The delegation also included General Hoffmann from the military command. The Austro-Hungarian delegation was led by the Foreign Minister, Count Ottokar Czernin, the Turkish by the Grand Vizier Talaat Pasha, and the Bulgarian by the Minister of Justice Popov.

At the first plenary sitting the Soviet delegation read out a declaration based on the ideas of a democratic peace without annexations and indemnities in line with the Decree on Peace. The Soviet delegation proposed the following six points as the basis for the negotiations for the conclusion of a general democratic peace:

"1. No forcible annexation of territories conquered during the war. Troops occupying such territories to be speedily withdrawn.

"2. Political independence to be fully restored to peoples that have lost their independence during the war.

"3. National groups which before the war were not politically independent to be given the possibility of deciding freely the question of their belonging to this or that state or of their state independence by referendum. This referendum to be organised in such a way as to ensure full freedom of voting for the entire population of the given territory, including immigrants and refugees.

"4. In territories inhabited by several nationalities the right of the minority to cultural and national independence and, where actually possible, to administrative autonomy to be protected by special laws.

"5. No belligerent country to be required to pay another country any so-called war costs; contributions already levied to be paid back. Indemnity to individuals for losses sustained in the war to be paid from a special fund to be set up from proportional contributions from all the belligerent countries.

"6. Colonial questions to be settled in conformity with the principles in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4."[1]

In addition to the above-mentioned six points the Soviet delegation proposed that any indirect restriction of the freedom of weak nations on the part of stronger nations, such as economic boycott, trade agreements, customs agreements, that fetter the freedom of trade of third countries, a sea blockade that does not pursue directly military aims, etc., be recognised as inadmissible.

The Soviet proposals accorded so closely with the desires of the working people of the whole world that the governments of Germany and its allies dared not reject them openly. Therefore on December 12 (25) the head of the German delegation to Brest-Litovsk, von Kühlmann, announced that "the basic provisions of the Russian declaration may be made the basis of the negotiations on ... peace".[2] However, he made a reservation which practically invalidated the preceding statement by the head of the German delegation. He said that "the proposals of the Russian delegation could be put into practice only if all the powers taking part in the war, without exception and without reservation and within a definite time limit, undertook to observe most strictly the terms common to all peoples".[3]

In its reply the Soviet delegation stressed that it noted the agreement of the central powers with the principles of a general, democratic peace proclaimed by Soviet Russia. At the same time it strongly attacked all attempts to distort or weaken the importance of the six points which it had proposed. The Soviet delegation noted that acceptance of the Soviet peace formula by the powers of the Quadruple Alliance made it possible to begin negotiations for a general peace between all the belligerent powers. In view of this the Soviet delegation requested a ten-day interval in order to inform its government of the situation. This interval was also necessary so that "the peoples, whose governments have not yet joined in the negotiations for a general peace, should have the opportunity of acquainting themselves sufficiently with the principles now laid down for such a peace".[4] This proposal of the Soviet delegation was accepted by the delegations of the German bloc. However, they requested that during the interval in the plenary meetings of the peace conference its commissions (political, economic and legal) should continue their work. These commissions were to discuss questions which, even if the Entente agreed to take part in the negotiations, would still be the subject of special discussion between Soviet Russia and Germany as concerning these two countries only.

[1] *The Brest-Litovsk Peace Negotiations*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1920, pp. 7-8 (in Russian).

[2] Ibid., p. 9.

[3] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[4] Ibid., p. 13.

On December 13 (26) there was a meeting of the Political Commission at which Russian and German representatives were present. At this meeting von Kühlmann did his utmost to avoid a discussion of the territorial and political questions which the Soviet side was insisting should be solved as quickly as possible. Instead of this he proposed discussing questions of the trade and economic relations between Germany and Russia, and also the question of renewing the former treaties.

The Soviet delegation supported the renewal of trade relations. But it immediately announced the impossibility of renewing the Russian-German Commercial Treaty of 1904 which had remained in force up to the outbreak of the war and was extremely unfavourable to Russia.

After most of the questions of the trade agreement had been considered, the Soviet side repeated its request for a discussion of territorial problems.

At a meeting on December 14 (27) the Soviet representatives again raised the question of the withdrawal of foreign troops from the occupied territories and put forward the following proposal:

"In full accord with the public declarations of both contracting parties that they cherish no bellicose plans, and that they desire to conclude peace without forcible annexations, Russia will withdraw its troops from all parts of Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Persia, occupied by it, while the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance will withdraw theirs from Poland, Lithuania, Courland and other regions of Russia."[5]

The Soviet proposal was aimed at granting the population of these areas the right to decide its own fate freely: either to join with an existing state, or to set up a state of its own. Moreover the Soviet delegation was particularly insistent that no troops should remain in the afore-mentioned areas. The Soviet delegation's proposal proceeded from the democratic principles of the self-determination of nations formulated in the Decree on Peace.

In reply to the Soviet delegation's proposal von Kühlmann on behalf of Germany and Austria-Hungary presented a draft which in effect provided for the disguised forcible secession from Russia of Poland, Lithuania, Courland, a part of Estonia and Lifland. Von Kühlmann announced hypocritically that this was in keeping with the wishes of the peoples of these territories. The Soviet representatives insisted on the need for holding a plebiscite in Lithuania, Courland, Poland and the other occupied territories. But the German imperialists knew that the results would not be in their favour. Consequently they sought to pass off as organs of self-government the puppet governments which they had set up in the occupied regions and refused to withdraw their troops from there. The proposals of Germany and

[5] *The Brest-Litovsk Peace Negotiations*, Vol. I, p. 28.

Austria-Hungary showed clearly their desire to annex a large portion of Russian territory and impose harsh peace terms on the Soviet Republic. Faced with the Soviet delegation's firm refusal to consent to the secession of the Russian Western territories, the German imperialists decided to put pressure on the Soviet government by making use of the self-styled Ukrainian Central Rada, which consisted of bourgeois reactionary nationalists and separatists whose representatives were expected to arrive in Brest.

In reply to General Hoffmann's inquiry, the Soviet delegation announced: "We shall most certainly inform General Hoffmann as soon as we are notified that our delegation is reinforced with representatives from the Ukraine."[6] Thus it was stressed that the delegation from the Ukraine would be a part of the Soviet delegation.

At a meeting of the Political Commission on December 15 (28) the German delegation outlined its government's economic demands which aimed at enslaving Russia.

On December 15 (28) the first stage of the peace negotiations was concluded, and the Soviet delegation left for Petrograd to report to its government.

Predatory Demands of German Imperialism

The Soviet government used the interval in the negotiations to acquaint the peoples of the belligerent countries with its peace proposals. On December 17 (30), 1917 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs again addressed an appeal to the peoples and governments of the Allied countries, calling upon them to take part in the peace negotiations.

The Entente powers and the USA ignored the Appeal on this occasion too. Their silence showed that they refused to take part in the peace talks.

The open demonstration of a predatory policy on the part of Germany demanded new measures from the Soviet government. On December 18 (31), the Council of People's Commissars heard a report on the state of the army. Considering the possibility of a break with the Germans, Lenin proposed accelerating the reorganisation of the army and strengthening the country's defence capacity, and also taking special steps in the event of the Germans breaking through to Petrograd. At the same time it was decided to intensify the campaign against the Germans' annexationist demands and to try to have the peace negotiations transferred to Stockholm. In Brest-Litovsk the negotiations were isolated from the international working-class and democratic public. The cabled correspondence of the Soviet

[6] *The Brest-Litovsk Peace Negotiations*, Vol. I, p. 32.

delegation was intercepted and distorted by the Germans and the communication of information was delayed. Transferring the negotiations to a neutral town would facilitate communication with Petrograd and make it possible to address the working people of the world, which was impossible in enemy-occupied Brest-Litovsk. The Council of People's Commissars decided to continue the peace negotiations, but to resist the Germans' attempts to speed them up. The Soviet delegation dragged out the negotiations to gain the time the Land of Soviets needed to create an efficient army.

However, at this time the so-called war party, the most eminent representatives of which were generals Ludendorff and Hoffmann and Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, gained the upper hand in German ruling circles on the question of the peace negotiations with Soviet Russia. They demanded that Russia should be presented immediately an ultimatum containing the annexationist peace terms. Ludendorff also demanded the immediate publication of a statement by the German government to the effect that it no longer considered itself bound by the Soviet peace terms it had accepted earlier. The German government agreed to the demands of Ludendorff and other representatives of the war party. On January 3 it issued a statement in which it rejected the Soviet proposal that the peace negotiations be transferred to Stockholm. On January 7 in a letter to von Hindenburg Chancellor Hertling promised the Supreme Command that in future "a very firm stand" would be taken in the negotiations with the Russians and that the Soviet delegation would be told that "there can be no retreat from our counter-proposals".[7]

When the peace conference resumed its work on December 27 (January 9), von Kühlmann stated that the German government would accept the Soviet peace formula on condition that it was also accepted by the Entente governments. This condition had not been fulfilled. Consequently there could be no question of Germany's acceptance of the formula. Von Kühlmann stressed that the negotiations must be continued, but objected categorically to their being transferred to Stockholm. The position of the German delegation was supported by the representatives of Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey.

At the plenary sitting on December 28, 1917 (January 10, 1918) efforts were made to weaken the position of the Soviet delegation by using the representative of the Ukrainian Central Rada, Golubovich, who made a statement of non-recognition of the power of the Council of People's Commissars and of the Rada's decision to take part independently in the peace negotiations on equal terms with the other states.

[7] *Die Ursachen des Deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahre 1918...*, Zweiter Band, 1929, p. 129.

While Golubovich was making this statement, the bourgeois Central Rada was already fleeing from Kiev and no longer possessed any power or territory. Soviet power was established throughout almost the whole of the Ukraine. The Soviet government of the Ukraine sent its delegation to Brest-Litovsk. The representatives of the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee arrived there at the end of January.

The delegations of the Quadruple Alliance refused to recognise the authority of the delegation from the Soviet Ukrainian government. In this they were supported by Trotsky, who had replaced Joffe as head of the Soviet delegation in the second stage of the negotiations. Trotsky officially recognised the authority of the Central Rada delegation. This was a betrayal of the interests of the working people both of the Ukraine and of Russia.

Trotsky was not only aware of the position of Lenin and the Soviet government in respect of the bourgeois-nationalist Rada. He was also aware that the working people of the Ukraine had already liberated the greater part of their country from the power of the Central Rada and set up Soviet power. He was aware that the Rada delegates represented no one, that there was a Soviet government of the Ukraine, and that it had already sent its delegation to Brest-Litovsk. Trotsky's statement was used by the German imperialists. Golubovich noted that it determined the subsequent status of the Central Rada delegation as a full-fledged member of the peace conference on all questions. At the plenary sitting of the peace conference on December 30, 1917 (January 12, 1918) Count Czernin stated on behalf of the four powers of the German bloc that they recognised the Ukrainian Rada delegation as independent and representing the Ukrainian state.

In the evening of the same day at a meeting of the Political Commission Hoffmann stated that Germany objected to a plebiscite to determine the destiny of the territories of Poland, Lithuania and Courland occupied by its troops. At the same time Hoffmann stressed that Germany did not intend to withdraw its troops from these territories and cited technical and administrative reasons for this. This was the programme of territorial aggrandisement by German imperialism, veiled by references to the alleged self-determination of the nations it had enslaved.

The Soviet representatives protested strongly against this crude distortion of the right of peoples to self-determination up to and including secession as proclaimed by Soviet power. They rightly pointed out that in the territories seized by the Germans there had not been, and could not have been any expression of will by the population. In accordance with the Soviet government's instructions they insisted on the prior withdrawal of German occupation troops from the annexed territories as an essential prerequisite for the truly free expression of will by the population on the future destiny of the territories in question. The Soviet side firmly resisted the Germans'

attempts to use the slogan of self-determination as a subterfuge to deprive Russia of its Western territories in order to annex them to Germany.

Almost all the discussions revolved around the German draft of the first two clauses of the peace treaty, which laid down the terms concerning the frontiers and fate of the German-occupied territories. The Soviet delegation demanded that the withdrawal of German troops from these territories should take place parallel with the demobilisation of the Russian army,[8] but the German side insisted that the evacuation be postponed until a general peace was signed.[9] At the same time the Germans sought to make the Soviet side recognise as legal the decisions of the puppet "representative" institutions in the Baltic set up on the orders of the German invaders.

The Soviet delegation pointed out that the will of the peoples could be freely expressed "only given the prior withdrawal of foreign troops from the territories in question".[10] It declared that it could not recognise "self-determination" under German occupation.[11]

On January 1 (14), 1918 von Kühlmann presented the Soviet delegation with the German peace terms: the troops of Germany and its allies to remain in the Russian territories occupied by them; Germany to refuse to hold a referendum there. At a meeting of the Political Commission on January 5 (18) the German representatives defined their territorial claims more precisely. Hoffmann spread out a map with a line showing the Western frontiers of Soviet Russia. The line ran only north of Brest-Litovsk. The frontier to the south of Brest-Litovsk, the general announced, would be discussed separately with the delegates of the Ukrainian Central Rada. "I shall leave this map on the table," the general added, "and request ... those present to study it."[12] The frontier line proposed by Germany deprived Russia of more than 150,000 square versts.[13]

After Hoffmann's speech it became obvious that Germany was bent on presenting an ultimatum. "The peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk," Lenin wrote on January 7 (20), 1918 concerning the German proposals, "have by now January 7, 1918—made it perfectly

[8] *The Brest-Litovsk Peace Negotiations*, Vol. I, p. 70.

[9] Ibid., pp. 68, 71.

[10] Ibid., p. 72.

[11] Ibid., p. 92.

[12] Ibid., p. 126.

[13] Ibid., p. 130. Russia lost the territories of the former Kingdom of Poland, Lithuania and a large area inhabited by Byelorussians. The frontier line was to run from Brest-Litovsk to Dvinsk (to the west of it) and cut off the territory inhabited by the Letts, dividing it into two parts, so that Russia lost the former Courland Gubernia and part of the Lifland Gubernia, including the town of Riga. This line also cut off the islands in the Baltic inhabited by Estonians from mainland Estonia.

clear that the war party has undoubtedly gained the upper hand in the German government (which has the other governments of the Quadruple Alliance at its beck and call) and has virtually already presented Russia with an ultimatum (and it is to be expected, most certainly to be expected, that any day now it will be presented formally). The ultimatum is as follows: either the continuation of the war, or a peace with annexations."[14]

In this situation, the Soviet delegation, in accordance with Lenin's instructions, demanded another ten-day interval in the negotiations and left Brest-Litovsk to report to the Soviet government.

Lenin's Struggle for the Immediate Conclusion of Peace

In connection with the stand adopted by the German imperialists the Soviet state had to make a decision of vital importance: whether or not to conclude peace on the harsh terms proposed by the Germans. There was disagreement within the leading bodies on this question. Lenin had to wage a firm struggle in the Party's Central Committee for the immediate conclusion of a separate peace on the extremely harsh terms proposed by Germany.

Insisting that these terms should be accepted, Lenin pointed out: "The socialist government of Russia is faced with the question—a question whose solution brooks no delay—of whether to accept this peace with annexations now, or to immediately wage a revolutionary war. In fact, no middle course is possible."[15] Lenin was firmly convinced that the only salvation for the young Soviet state lay in the immediate conclusion of peace with Germany and its allies. He set out his point of view in the "Theses on the Question of the Immediate Conclusion of a Separate and Annexationist Peace" which he read out on January 8 (21) at a meeting of members of the Central Committee of the Party and the Bolshevik delegates to the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets. In his theses Lenin analysed the international situation and the course of the Brest peace negotiations. He stressed that it was absolutely essential for Soviet power to gain a peaceful breathing-space as soon as possible in order to crush the growing resistance of the bourgeoisie within the country and to solve the organisational tasks of the socialist reconstruction of the economy. "The position of the socialist revolution in Russia," Lenin pointed out, "must form the basis of any definition of the international tasks of our Soviet power."[16] "In concluding a separate peace,"

[14] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 444.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., p. 443.

Lenin noted, "we free ourselves *as much as is possible at the present moment* from both hostile imperialist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare which hamper concerted action on their part against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution."[17]

The results of the discussion of the question of peace at this meeting were as follows: about half of the participants voted for declaring a "revolutionary war" on Germany, which was fervently supported and propagated in the party by the "Left Communists" led by Bukharin. About a quarter of those present supported Trotsky's "middle course"—"to declare the war ended, to demobilise the army but not to sign a treaty". And only about a quarter of the participants supported Lenin's proposal for the immediate signing of a treaty.

Lenin saw clearly that a resumption of the war could mean the advance of the German army, the fall of Petrograd, and the collapse of the revolution. Soviet Russia did not yet possess a new army and it was impossible to create one in a short time. The old army was not fit to offer resistance. The masses were longing for peace. However, Trotsky and the "Left Communists" led by Bukharin actively opposed the implementation of Lenin's policy of concluding peace.

Russia's bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties also opposed the conclusion of peace. Thus, all the political parties, from the Constitutional-Democrats who represented the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole class, to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, together with "Left Communists", demanded the continuation of the war. The bourgeoisie hoped that young Soviet power would be defeated in single combat with German imperialism, and then it would succeed in coming to power again. This is why it wanted a break-down of the peace negotiations which the Soviet government was conducting.

To this end the bourgeoisie shouted loudly that the Soviet government was "betraying" Russia by conducting peace negotiations with Germany, although the bourgeoisie itself was not averse to opening negotiations with the selfsame Germans secretly and reaching an agreement with them on any terms. The following is an extract from information about these plans by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, which it brought to the notice of the Soviet delegation in Brest:

"We have received reliable information that the 'patriotic' members of the Constituent Assembly have made an attempt to begin 'negotiations' with the Austro-German delegation through the agency of a neutral embassy. The plan of these unemployed patriots is in the event of the Soviet government refusing to conclude peace on unfavourable terms, to 'seize' the matter into their own hands and sign a peace treaty at all costs. We have never doubted that Messrs. Milyu-

[17] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 448-49.

kovs, Avksentyevs-Tseretelis and all the other heroes of June 18 would now give 'half a kingdom' for the restoration of bourgeois power in the other half of Russia."

It was only thanks to Lenin's unbending will and persistence that the negotiations in Brest-Litovsk were resumed.

At a meeting of the Central Committee on January 11 (24) the "Left Communists", who supported declaring a "revolutionary" war against Germany, were defeated. But the majority of the Central Committee (nine members), in spite of Lenin's opinion, approved Trotsky's disastrous tactics of "neither war nor peace", which were bound in the end to wreck the peace negotiations that would immediately be used by Kaiser Germany as an excuse to launch a new attack on Soviet Russia.

In this situation Lenin considered it extremely important not to allow the Brest negotiations to break down and to prevent Trotsky and Bukharin from pursuing their adventurist tactics with respect to war and peace. At the same meeting of the Central Committee Lenin succeeded in obtaining a decision to drag out the peace negotiations. The Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which was being held at this time, decided to grant the Soviet government broad powers on the question of war and peace.

After this the Left opposition (Bukharin, Pyatakov, Preobrazhensky, etc.) wrote to the Central Committee requesting the convocation of a party conference and threatening to retire in the event of a treaty being signed. The Moscow Committee, on which the opposition had a majority, was particularly harsh in its criticism of Lenin's policy on the question of peace. In its resolution the Moscow Committee supported a "revolutionary war" and demanded that the Council of People's Commissars should break off the peace negotiations.

On January 19 (February 1), when the question of the convocation of a party conference was discussed in the Central Committee, Lenin spoke against these proposals. He stated that the conference decisions could not be binding on the Central Committee and that such decisions could be passed only by a Party Congress.

After the Central Committee had adopted Lenin's proposal the resolution on dragging out the peace negotiations became the Party's guiding line on the question of war and peace. It was proceeding from this that Lenin supplemented his "Theses on the Question of the Immediate Conclusion of a Separate and Annexationist Peace" with a point that took into account the latest changes in the international situation—the growth of the revolutionary movement in Germany and Austria. "This fact offers us the opportunity, for the time being, of further delaying and dragging out the peace negotiations."[18]

[18] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 450.

On Lenin's proposal it was decided before convening a party congress to sound opinion on the question of peace at a meeting of party workers. The meeting took place on February 3. All present, with one exception, voted against the immediate breaking off of the Brest negotiations. To the question of whether a peace with annexations should be signed with Germany in the event of the Germans breaking off the negotiations or presenting an ultimatum, all the participants, except two, replied in the affirmative.

Thus, the "Left Communists" and Trotsky were roundly defeated at this meeting and did not dare to oppose the Party line on the question of peace openly. Nevertheless, they refused to admit their mistake. They were clearly bent upon splitting the Party and were doing their utmost to prevent the signing of a peace treaty. The "Left Communists" managed to ensure that on February 24 a minimal quorum of the Moscow Regional Bureau of the Party passed a resolution in which it expressed lack of confidence in the Central Committee in view of its political line and stated that "in the interests of the world revolution" the Bureau considered it "expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power, which is now becoming purely formal". Lenin called this decision strange and monstrous.[19]

Lenin said: "Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push*, and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being 'legitimised'? Such a 'theory' would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to 'pushing' revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is obligatory always and under all conditions. Actually, however, the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength."[20]

The "Left Communists" refusal to conclude a peace treaty with Germany and the other powers of the German bloc was linked with a lack of belief in the possibility of establishing peaceful relations between Soviet Russia and the capitalist countries. Referring to the invalidity of such statements, Lenin pointed out: "A socialist republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not, from this point of view, conclude any economic treaties, and could not exist at all, without flying to the moon."[21]

[19] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Moscow, 1965, p. 69.
[20] Ibid., pp. 71-72.
[21] Ibid., p. 71.

The Break-Down of the Brest Negotiations

On January 17 (30), 1918 the sittings of the Brest peace conference were resumed. The German delegation was clearly bent on delivering an ultimatum and at the same time was carrying on secret negotiations with representatives of the bourgeois-nationalist Central Ukrainian Rada. At the first plenary sitting the Soviet delegation announced the arrival of the representatives of the Soviet Ukraine and their inclusion in the Russian delegation.

In spite of that, Trotsky continued his treacherous policy: he did not object to the continued participation of the Rada delegation in the peace negotiations. But the very fact of the appearance in Brest of the representatives of the Soviet Ukraine upset the plans of German diplomacy. On January 21 (February 3) the Germans suspended the negotiations until January 25 (February 7), 1918. Von Kühlmann and Czernin left for Berlin for consultations.

On January 22 (February 4) the German delegation had a conference in Berlin with the Supreme Command, and on the following day with Czernin and the Austro-Hungarian Command. It was decided to end negotiations with the Ukrainian Central Rada speedily, requesting it to undertake to supply a large quantity of grain and other foodstuffs for Austria-Hungary and Germany. In return it was promised military support. After the conclusion of the negotiations with the Ukrainian Rada it was decided to present Soviet Russia with an ultimatum immediately demanding that the German peace terms be accepted.

Upon their return to Brest on January 25 (February 7), the German and Austo-Hungarian delegations hastily concluded the negotiations with the representatives of the Ukrainian Rada and on January 27 (February 9) a peace treaty was signed with it.

On the evening of the same day at a meeting in the Political Committee von Kühlmann announced curtly that "the peace negotiations cannot be dragged out endlessly". After recalling the main points of the German demands, he stressed that their acceptance by Russia was an absolutely essential condition for the conclusion of a peace. This was in fact an ultimatum.

In reply to a query from the Soviet delegation as to how it should act, Lenin sent the following telegram: "You know our standpoint; it has lately been confirmed."[22] Lenin categorically insisted on the signing of a treaty. Before the Soviet delegation left for Brest Lenin gave Trotsky clear instructions about which he later informed the Seventh Party Congress: "... It was agreed between us that we would hold out until the Germans presented an ultimatum, and then we would give way... I proposed quite definitely that peace

[22] Ibid., p. 517.

be concluded."[23]

Trotsky criminally ignored Lenin's instructions. In reply to the German ultimatum Trotsky announced at the conference on February 10 that "while desisting from signing an annexationist treaty, Russia, for its part, declares the state of war with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria to be ended. Simultaneously orders are being given for the demobilisation of all Russian forces on all fronts".[24]

Von Kühlmann immediately stated: "If the peace treaty is not signed, the armistice agreement will obviously lose its meaning, and at the end of the term laid down by it war will be resumed."[25] Trotsky refused to negotiate further.

These actions of Trotsky's surprised even the German representatives, at least those of them who wanted to end the Brest negotiations with the signing of a peace treaty.

This, for example, is how a representative of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs described Trotsky's position in a telegram from Brest-Litovsk on February 11: "Almost everyone here considers that nothing more favourable to us than Trotsky's decision could have happened. It is, of course, staggering at first glance. By this decision Trotsky is renouncing all the advantages of a country that wages war and concludes peace. In concluding peace we would have had to make him various important concessions. Now we can arrange everything as we please. The territorial question will be decided exactly as we like."[26]

Trotsky was not content with grossly disobeying Lenin's instructions and breaking off the Brest negotiations. Without consulting the Council of People's Commissars he at once sent a telegram to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief N. V. Krylenko demanding the issue of an order straightaway to the army on the ending of the state of war with the powers of the German bloc and on the demobilisation of the Russian army.

Lenin immediately condemned Trotsky's criminal actions most firmly and categorically. Lenin foresaw that "we could not have got anything better than the Brest peace ... we had to accept peace and not try vain blustering".[27]

In her reminiscences Nadezhda Krupskaya writes about this treachery of Trotsky's: "A lover of eloquent words and beautiful poses, he did not even think so much how to extricate Soviet Russia from the war and win a respite in order to consolidate our strength and raise

[23] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 113.

[24] *The Peace Negotiations at Brest-Litovsk*, Vol. I, p. 208.

[25] Ibid., p. 209.

[26] *Soviet-German Relations from the Brest-Litovsk Negotiations to the Signing of the Rapallo Treaty. Collected Documents, 1917-1918*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1968, p. 321 (in Russian).

[27] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 113.

the masses as of striking a fine pose: we refuse a humiliating peace, but we shall not fight the war. Ilyich called this a high-and-mighty, swaggering pose, saying it was the slogan of an adventurer who surrendered to chaos and plunder a country where the proletariat had come to power and the building of a great project had commenced."[28]

Trotsky's treachery served the purpose of the leaders of the German war party, Hindenburg, Ludendorff, William II and others, who had long been demanding that von Kühlmann break off the negotiations. Trotsky helped them achieve this aim. He gave them a good excuse to resume the war against Soviet Russia.

At 7.30 p.m. on February 16 Hoffmann officially informed A. A. Samoilo, the Soviet military expert in Brest, that the armistice would end and military operations would be resumed at 12 hours on February 18. On February 17 the Soviet government protested to Germany that the Germans had grossly violated the armistice terms by not giving seven days' notice of their intention to end it, as stipulated in the armistice agreement. Germany left the Soviet protest unanswered.

The Resumption of Negotiations

On February 18 German troops began an offensive along the whole front. That day the Party Central Committee met several times. At the morning meeting it discussed Lenin's proposal that a telegram be dispatched to the Germans proposing the continuation of the peace negotiations. At this meeting Trotsky and Bukharin succeeded in passing a resolution that a decision on this question be postponed. However, at the evening meeting, when it became known that German troops had taken Dvinsk and were advancing to the Ukraine, this resolution was reconsidered. Bukharin, Dzerzhinsky, Lomov and Uritsky spoke against the conclusion of a peace, but they were in the minority. Trotsky suggested asking the Germans about their terms. Objecting to the proposal of Trotsky's, Lenin said: "If we apply to the Germans, all we have is a piece of paper. You can't call that a policy. The only thing we can do is offer the Germans a resumption of the talks."[29]

At the same time Lenin stressed the exceptionally grave danger for Soviet Russia of further delay in signing a peace treaty with Germany: "Examine the *facts* relating to the behaviour of the Anglo-French bourgeoisie," he wrote. "They are doing everything they can to drag us into the war against Germany now, they are offering us millions of blessings, boots, potatoes, shells, locomotives.... They want us to fight against Germany *now*.

[28] N. K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Part III, Moscow, 1934, (in Russian).

[29] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 522.

"It is obvious why they should want this; they want it because in the first place, we should engage part of the German forces. And secondly, because Soviet power might collapse most easily from an untimely armed clash with German imperialism.

"The Anglo-French bourgeoisie are setting a trap for us: please be kind enough to go and fight *now*, our gain will be magnificent. The Germans will plunder you, will 'do well' in the East, will agree to cheaper terms in the West, and furthermore, Soviet power will be swept away.... Please do fight, Bolshevik 'allies', we shall help you! "[30] At Lenin's insistence the Central Committee decided at the same meeting to send a wireless message to the Germans accepting their terms.[31]

On the night of February 18 Lenin sent the following wireless message to Berlin:

"The Council of People's Commissars lodges a protest over the German Government's movement of troops against the Russian Soviet Republic, which has declared the state of war ended and had started to demobilise its army on all fronts.

"The Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia could not have expected such a step especially since neither of the parties to the armistice has directly or indirectly, given seven days' notice of its intention to terminate the armistice, as both parties to the treaty of December 2 (15), 1917, have undertaken to do.

"The Council of People's Commissars finds itself forced, in the situation that has arisen, to declare its readiness formally to sign peace on the terms proposed by the delegations of the Quadruple Alliance at Brest-Litovsk.

"The Council of People's Commissars declares that a reply to the exact peace terms proposed by the German Government will be given without delay."[32]

On the morning of February 19, foreseeing that the German imperialists would delay their reply in order to seize as much war materiel as possible and advance further into the heart of the country, Lenin dispatched a courier to the German command with the official text of the statement of agreement to sign a peace.

The German troops continued their offensive along the entire front, as Lenin had assumed. The Bolshevik Party called on the people to resist the aggressors. Lenin summoned military specialists and consulted with them on ways of repulsing the enemy. He demanded from the troops firm resistance to the aggressors. Thus, when a telegram arrived at the Council of People's Commissars from the town of Drissa asking what to do in connection with the capture of Dvinsk

[30] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 28.

[31] Ibid., Vol. 26, p. 525.

[32] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 106.

and the subsequent German advance, Lenin gave the following reply of February 19:

"Offer resistance where it is possible. Evacuate all valuables and foodstuffs. Destroy all the rest. Leave nothing to the enemy. Take up the railway lines—two versts out of every ten. Blow up the bridges."[33]

On February 20 the Council of People's Commissars adopted the Appeal to the Working Population of All Russia which was published in the newspapers on February 21. After describing the course of the peace negotiations over the last few days, the Council of People's Commissars noted that no reply had been received from the Germans and that the enemy was seeking to gain as much territory as possible. The Council of People's Commissars called on the local Soviets and public organisations to do their utmost to build up the army, regulate transport and food situation, and maintain strict order.

The telegraph reports from the front brought news of the growing offensive of the German troops: the capture of Orsha and Rezhitsa. The Soviet government passed a special decision on the organisation of the struggle against the advancing German army.

On February 21 the Council of People's Commissars adopted an appeal to the people entitled "The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger!" It read in part: "*The Socialist Republic of Soviets is in gravest danger.* Until the proletariat of Germany arises and triumphs, it is the sacred duty of the workers and peasants of Russia to devotedly defend the Republic of Soviets against the hordes of bourgeois-imperialist Germany."[34]

At 4 p.m. on February 21 there was a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. It approved the call of the Council of People's Commissars to mobilise all the forces of the revolution and resolved to establish a Committee for the Revolutionary Defence of Petrograd composed of its deputies, which at once began to organise the defence of the city.

At 10 p.m. an emergency meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee was held, at which Y. M. Sverdlov reported on the state of affairs. By an overwhelming majority of votes, with only six against, the Committee adopted a resolution approving all the measures of the Council of People's Commissars aimed at concluding peace and expressed the full unshakeable conviction that workers, soldiers and peasants would rise as one man to defend Soviet power.

On the morning of February 22 the Council of People's Commissars' appeal "The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger!" was published. *Pravda* wrote addressing the workers and soldiers: "Let us move revolutionary detachments of the workers' and peasants' Red Army against the piratical attack of the German whiteguards. Workers of

[33] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, Moscow, 1966, p. 329.
[34] Ibid., Vol. 27, p. 30.

Petrograd! Soldiers! Advanced fighters! Rise to the defence of the revolutionary capital, the Red Bastion of the world revolution. To arms!"

At this time the newly formed units of the Red Army were sent to the front and on some sectors they halted the advance of the German troops.

Finally, at midnight on February 22 the Tsarskoye Selo Radio Station received a wireless message from General Hoffmann stating that at 6 a.m. the German government's reply had been handed to the Soviet government's courier. Almost simultaneously a wire came from Czernin: "Austria-Hungary is prepared, jointly with its allies, to bring the peace negotiations to a final conclusion."[35]

The courier with the German reply arrived in Petrograd on February 23, at 10.30 a.m. It was an ultimatum containing new territorial claims and economic demands which were far more onerous than those made at Brest-Litovsk. The ultimatum consisted of ten points.

Paragraph 1 dealt with the ending of the state of war.

Paragraph 2 stated that the territory to the west of the "Hoffmann line" would no longer be subject to the territorial sovereignty of Russia. But the Germans substantially "revised" the "Hoffmann line" in their favour compared with the way it was laid down in the Brest-Litovsk ultimatum.

In Paragraph 3 Germany demanded the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops and the Red Guard from the parts of Lifland and Estland still held by them and the occupation of these territories by German "police" forces "until such a time as the local authorities are able to guarantee tranquility and order is restored". Thus, in addition to the annexations which had already been envisaged by the Brest-Litovsk ultimatum, the new ultimatum in fact envisaged the seizure of all the Baltic lands by German imperialism.

Under Paragraph 4 Soviet Russia had to withdraw from the Ukraine and Finland and conclude a peace with the Ukrainian Central Rada.

Paragraph 5 obliged Russia to withdraw its troops from Eastern Anatolia and return it to Turkey without delay.

In Paragraph 6 the Germans demanded the demobilisation of the Russian Army, including the units newly formed by the Soviet government. The Russian Navy was to sail to Russian ports and stay there until the end of the war or be disarmed. Mercantile navigation was to be restored in the Black and Baltic seas, but the blockade of the Arctic Ocean was to remain in force.

Paragraph 7 contained a demand for the renewal of the Commercial Treaty of 1904, highly disadvantageous for Russia, concluded by

[35] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Radiogram, from the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Czernin to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR, February 23, 1918.

Nicholas II with Germany during the Russo-Japanese war. New burdensome clauses were added to the treaty.

Paragraph 8 stated that questions of a legal nature should be decided by a Russo-German Committee and provided for compensation for the maintenance of prisoners of war. As subsequent events showed, Kaiser Germany used the obligations imposed by this point to force the Soviet state to pay a sum of 6,000 million gold marks, which was formally called compensation for losses sustained by individuals and for the maintenance of prisoners of war.

Paragraph 9 demanded that the Soviet government should end all agitation and propaganda against the countries of the German bloc. Germany did not undertake similar obligations.

Finally, Paragraph 10 stipulated that the German ultimatum was to be accepted within 48 hours. It also stipulated that representatives should be sent to Brest-Litovsk immediately and within three days sign the peace treaty which was to be ratified within two weeks.

German troops continued their offensive even after the delivery of the ultimatum.

On February 23 there was a meeting of the Central Committee. By a majority of votes it was decided to accept the German terms immediately. On February 24 the All-Russia Central Executive Committee also voted by a majority to sign the peace treaty. This decision was dispatched by the Council of People's Commissars to the German government in Berlin. The Soviet Command sent the German General Headquarters a statement to the effect that since the Council of People's Commissars had accepted the German peace terms there was no longer any reason to continue military operations.[36]

The Germans did not reply. They continued the offensive. On February 24 Tartu, Ostrov and Borisov were taken. Not until night was the cynical reply received from General Hoffmann that "the old armistice is null and void and cannot return to force".[37] Hoffmann added that the offensive would be continued until the peace treaty was signed.

The Conclusion of the Peace Treaty

As a result of the resistance which German troops encountered at Narva and Pskov they did not succeed in taking Petrograd. More and more new Soviet units were sent to the front. The whole country was rising up to fight the aggressors. This induced the Germans not to prolong the fighting on the Eastern front any more and to

[36] *Rabochaya i Krestyanskaya Krasnaya Armiya i Flot,* No. 24, February 27, 1918.

[37] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents,* Vol. I, p. 113.

resume the negotiations.

The Soviet delegation consisting of L. M. Karakhan, G. I. Petrovsky, G. V. Chicherin and others left for Brest-Litovsk on the evening of February 24. Arriving in Pskov on the evening of February 25, it lodged a protest with the German Command against the offensive of the German troops. It received no reply. The Soviet delegation renewed its protest in Brest-Litovsk on February 28. A sitting of the peace conference was held on March 1. The head of the German delegation Envoy von Rosenberg[38] stated again that military operations could be ceased only after the signing of the peace treaty.[39]

Von Rosenberg, who chaired the meeting, then proposed the setting up of three committees, political, economic and legal, in order to complete the discussion of the peace treaty in three days. Von Rosenberg read out the terms of the treaty, which proved to be even more onerous than those in the Pskov ultimatum. As a result of Trotsky's treacherous actions the negotiations now had to be conducted in far more difficult conditions than before.

The Soviet delegation refused to discuss the peace terms dictated by Germany and did not agree to the setting up of the committees. It was obvious that discussion of the German terms would result only in the seizure of new territories and military materiel by German troops. The Soviet delegation pointed to the compulsory nature of the treaty imposed on Russia, stressing that it "was not the fruit of agreement". "We are deprived of the possibility of considering the terms of this peace," the delegation declared, "and all the more this is impossible to do so in three days, and in a situation where the Germans are continuing their offensive." The Soviet delegation declared that the only way out of the situation that it could see was to accept the terms at once in the form in which they had been dictated. It proposed that the signing of the peace treaty should take place the next day. On March 3 the Brest Peace Treaty was signed.

The Question of War and Peace at the Extraordinary Seventh Party Congress

The Extraordinary Seventh Party Congress was held on March 6-8, 1918. The struggle of Lenin and other supporters of peace against Trotsky and the "Left Communists" broke out again here.

The Political Report of the Central Committee, which Lenin delivered to the Congress, contained a profound analysis of the international situation and the situation at home and in the Party and

[38] The Foreign Ministers who had led the delegations during the preceding stages had left to conclude a peace treaty with Romania.

[39] *The Brest-Litovsk Peace Negotiations*, Vol. I, p. 213.

developed the basic principles of Soviet Russia's foreign policy. Lenin devastatingly attacked Trotsky's formula of "neither war nor peace! " which the latter had used to mask his unprecedented betrayal of the interests of the Soviet state and the cause of the building of socialism.

Ignoring obvious facts, which were clear to the working masses of Russia, facts which showed that the signing of the Brest Peace Treaty put an end to the war between Russia and Germany and brought the long-awaited peace, Trotsky and the "Left Communists" did not cease their struggle against Lenin and the Brest Peace Treaty. They worked to have the treaty rejected by the Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the RCP(B), and then by the Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets.

Using his position as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Trotsky opened up negotiations with the British diplomatic representative in Russia Bruce Lockhart and with the head of the mission of the American Red Cross in Russia, Raymond Robins, in order to obtain assistance from the USA, Britain and France and to prevent the ratification of the Brest Treaty.[40]

The "Left Communists" led by Bukharin strove to prevent the ratification of the Brest Peace Treaty. They denied the possibility of establishing normal relations between the Soviet Republic and the capitalist countries. In his speech at the Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Bukharin, in spite of evidence to the contrary, denied the existence of contradictions or, as he said, a crack between the imperialist blocs, although they were fighting each other at the time. But "even if such a crack existed," Bukharin stated, "between Britain, France and America, on the one hand, and the Central Powers, on the other, peaceful coexistence between us, between the Soviet Republic and international capital, is in any case out of the question".[41] Bukharin said that should the need arise the lives of tens of thousands of workers could be sacrificed.

The stand of Bukharin and the other "Left Communists" was firmly criticised and rejected at the Congress. "If we throw our best detachments into battle now," said Y. M. Sverdlov, "at the present moment this would be suicide, not only political, but also purely physical suicide."[42] "By agreeing to the destruction of these detachments," Y. M. Sverdlov continued, "we would be cutting the very bough we're sitting on."[43]

[40] See: A. O. Chubarian, *V. I. Lenin and the Formation of Soviet Foreign Policy*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 176-80 (in Russian).

[41] *Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the RCP(B). March 6-8, 1918*, Verbatim Record, Moscow, 1962, p. 29 (in Russian).

[42] Ibid., p. 79.

[43] Ibid., p. 80.

In an impassioned speech F. A. Sergeyev (Artem) strongly condemned the behaviour of the "Left Communists". "... It seems that there are comrades," he said, "who are for some reason called Leftists and who suggest making the noble gesture—that of drawing the sword and perishing and thereby leaving a good memory. I believe that in the ranks of the proletariat such an action could leave a very distasteful memory."[44]

The struggle against Trotsky and the "Left Communists" was a tense one. Lenin addressed the Congress seventeen times. Eventually his policy of peace has approved by a majority of the Congress. The Congress recognised it as essential to ratify the peace treaty in view of the need to make use of even the slightest opportunity for a peaceful respite.

On March 12 the Council of People's Commissars was transferred from Petrograd to Moscow which now became the capital of the Soviet state. Two days later, on March 14, the Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets assembled. It was attended by 1,232 delegates with a casting vote. Of them 795 were Bolsheviks, 283 "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries, the rest consisting of Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, anarchists and a few non-party delegates.

The government of the USA sought to influence the Congress deliberations and decisions on the Brest Peace Treaty. In order to support the elements which opposed the Brest Treaty, US President Woodrow Wilson sent a message to the Congress, containing vague promises of help to Russia in the future. This manoeuvre was exposed, however.

Before the convocation of the Congress, the Soviet government, taking into account the possibility of it rejecting the Brest Treaty, officially enquired of the US government as to whether, in the event of hostilities with Germany being resumed, Soviet Russia could count on the support and assistance of the USA, Great Britain and France and what concrete support would be given in the immediate future. In addition, it asked the USA what steps the American government and the governments of the Entente would take if Japan tried to seize Vladivostok and the East Siberian Railway. The governments of the USA, Britain and France did not reply to this enquiry by the Soviet government, thereby confirming that in the event of war with Germany or Japanese invasion of Siberia Russia would receive no assistance from them.

In the light of these facts the Soviet government could have no illusions as to the true intentions of Wilson's government when his message to the Extraordinary Fourth Congress of Soviets was received.

Lenin's draft reply to Wilson, which was later adopted by the

[44] *Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the RCP(B), March 6-8, 1918*, p. 88.

Congress as a resolution, expressed thanks to the American people for their sympathy for the Russian people. The Congress also expressed to all peoples suffering from the horrors of the war "its profound sympathy and firm conviction that the happy time is not far away when the working people of all bourgeois countries will throw off the yoke of capital and establish a socialist system of society, the only system able to ensure a durable and just peace and also culture and well-being for all working people".[45]

The conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty was of tremendous international significance: Soviet Russia had shown the working people of the whole world that only the workers' and peasants' Soviet government could bring about Russia's withdrawal from the imperialist war and thereby give its people the long-awaited peace. This treaty played a most important role in the history of the Soviet state, in its consolidation. "The Brest treaty," Lenin remarked, "gave Soviet power the chance to organise the country and make possible the further development of the Soviet state."

A report on ratification of the peace treaty was delivered at the Congress by Lenin. A clear majority of the Congress deputies voted for the ratification—784 votes; there were 261 against and 115 abstentions. Among the abstainers were the "Left Communists" who had violated the Party Rules by their behaviour.

On March 17 the Brest Peace Treaty was ratified by the German side also and came into force. Soviet Russia at last withdrew from the imperialist war. The conclusion of the peace was of great significance. Thanks to Lenin's wisdom the first socialist country had been saved.

* * *

The Brest-Litovsk Conference was the first international conference at which a Soviet delegation was present and new principles of foreign policy were demonstrated. The Soviet government was upholding the interests not only of its own country but also of the working people throughout the world.

In spite of the conspiracy of silence which the imperialist press sought to organise around the Soviet peace programme and the terms of the peace treaty, they became known to the broad masses and gave further impetus to the struggle to terminate the imperialist war.

The Soviet delegation had insisted on a general democratic peace, a peace without annexations and indemnities, a peace based on recognition of the sovereignty and equal rights of both large and small peoples, on the recognition of a people's rights to self-determination, up to and including secession.

However, the course of the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk

[45] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 171.

and the discussion of the destiny of Russian territories occupied by the Germans confirmed that the German imperialists wished to impose an annexationist peace on Soviet Russia and wrest away its Western regions. They disguised this aim by alleging that self-determination had already taken place in these areas. The Germans claimed that the puppet organs of power which they had set up in the occupied territories were the true representatives of the peoples in these regions.

Soviet Russia obtained an adjournment of the peace negotiations in order to attempt once again to bring the Allied powers into them and turn them into general negotiations on peace. It was only the repeated refusal of the imperialist governments of the Entente powers that compelled the Soviet government, left face to face with German imperialism, to conclude a separate peace with Germany and its allies. The refusal of the Entente and the USA to take part in the peace negotiations strengthened Germany's position at Brest and encouraged it to present Russia with more onerous peace terms.

"It was the Anglo-French and the American bourgeoisie who refused to accept our proposal," wrote Lenin, "it was they who even refused to talk to us about a general peace! It was *they* who betrayed the interests of all nations; it was they who prolonged the imperialist slaughter!

"It was they who, banking on the possibility of dragging Russia back into the imperialist war, refused to take part in the peace negotiations and thereby gave a free hand to the no less predatory German capitalists who imposed the annexationist and harsh Brest Peace upon Russia!

"It is difficult to imagine anything more disgusting than the hypocrisy with which the Anglo-French and American bourgeoisie are now 'blaming' us *for* the Brest Peace Treaty."[46]

By signing the treaty, harsh though the terms were, the Soviet government not only gained a breathing-space, the chance to wage a successful struggle against the internal counter-revolution, to begin reorganising the economy and to build up a new army, but also strengthened the position of the masses throughout the world in their struggle against the imperialist war. At the price of bitter sacrifices and concessions the Party and the Soviet government saved the power of the Soviets and together with it all the epoch-making gains of the October Revolution.

[46] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, Moscow, 1974, pp. 64-65.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF THE FOREIGN ARMED INTERVENTION. THE SOVIET STATE'S STRUGGLE TO PROLONG THE RESPITE

(March-November 1918)

As a result of the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty with Germany and its allies Soviet Russia withdrew from the imperialist war. By achieving peace, Lenin and his supporters safeguarded Soviet Russia against German imperialism and won an essential "breathing-space" for the young Soviet state. "However that may be," Lenin said at the time, "we have extricated ourselves from the war. We are not saying that we have extricated ourselves without giving anything in return, without paying a price. But we have managed to get out of the war. We have given the people a breathing-space." Stressing the importance of this, Lenin noted that "after three years of war torment, every week of respite is a very great boon". [1] Because the winning of a breathing-space was primarily the result of Lenin's activity, Soviet diplomats called it the "Lenin breathing-space".

The peace treaty was a great achievement of Soviet foreign policy. "The Soviet government," wrote G. V. Chicherin, "consciously embarked upon the difficult trials prepared by the Brest Treaty, knowing that the workers' and peasants' revolution would prove stronger than imperialism and that the breathing-space meant the road to victory." [2]

Peace was necessary in order to get down to the building of socialism and the strengthening of Soviet power, above all of its foundation, the alliance between the working class and the peasantry. Peace alone made it possible to concentrate the energies of the proletariat of Russia on peaceful, creative work—on overcoming the disorganisation and devastation in the economy and building the foundation of a socialist economy. "Thanks to the peace," Lenin wrote in April 1918, "which has been achieved—despite its extremely onerous character and extreme instability—the Russian Soviet Republic has gained an opportunity to concentrate its efforts for a while on the most important and most difficult aspect of the socialist revolution, namely, the task of organisation." [3] Peace and time were also needed

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Moscow, 1965, pp. 166, 196.

[2] G. V. Chicherin, *Articles and Speeches on Foreign Policy*, Moscow, 1961, p. 101 (in Russian).

[3] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 237.

for building up a new army.

The ending of the state of war with Germany and its allies was also important because the establishment of peaceful relations with one group of imperialists made it more difficult for international imperialism to unite forces in order to fight the Soviet state. This made Soviet Russia's position easier and enabled it to pursue an independent policy.

The conclusion by Soviet Russia of a peace with Germany and its allies increased the antagonism between the Entente imperialists and those of the German bloc and weakened the onslaught of these two imperialist groups on Soviet Russia. This is what Lenin had in mind when he said that "we made a tremendous concession to German imperialism; by doing so we at once safeguarded ourselves against persecution by both imperialisms".[4]

Lenin resolutely demanded and urged, albeit at the price of great new sacrifices, that the Brest Treaty be preserved, because this was the only way of ensuring a respite. Its preservation and continuation became the main foreign policy task of the Communist Party and the Soviet state.

Germany's Aggressive Policy After the Signing of the Peace and the Soviet Government's Struggle Against This Policy

The maintenance of peace was no easy matter for Soviet Russia. From the very first day Germany began to violate grossly the treaty which had just been concluded. The most aggressive circles ignored the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty entirely and continued to plan a military campaign against the Land of Soviets with the aim of seizing territory, overthrowing Soviet power and turning Russia into a state dependent on Germany.

Although German ruling circles did not dare to renew a "big" war against Soviet Russia, they nevertheless continued to seize Russian territory. In May 1918 Lenin wrote: "At the present moment the majority of the German bourgeois parties stand for observing the Brest peace, but, of course, are very glad to 'improve' on it and to receive a few more annexations at Russia's expense."[5]

The Germans carried out these annexations under a variety of pretexts. Above all they took advantage of the absence of firmly established frontiers between Soviet Russia and the Ukraine. Making use of the treachery of the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists, they occupied the Ukraine and turned it into a base for their advance

[4] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Moscow, 1966, p. 439.

[5] Ibid., Vol. 27, p. 370.

into the heart of Russia. The German army in the Ukraine numbered almost a million men. In addition, there were over 300,000 Austro-Hungarian soldiers there. There were also large contingents of the German army in the Baltic lands, in close proximity to Petrograd.

The ink had barely dried on the Brest Treaty when the German imperialists began to carry out their predatory plans. In March 1918 their troops occupied the Donets Basin. Then they advanced further, to the Don, where they helped General Krasnov, the leader of a counter-revolutionary revolt, to form and equip an army to fight against the Soviet state. In April German troops invaded the Kursk, Orel and Voronezh gubernias. In May the German army seized the Crimea.

German imperialism also effected the occupation of Russian territories from Finland, making use for this purpose of the army under General von der Goltz, which was there. After crushing the socialist revolution in Finland, this army, together with White Finnish units, invaded Soviet Russia on the Karelian Isthmus. By the beginning of May it had taken Beloostrov, thereby threatening Petrograd. At the same time Turkey occupied Russian territory in the Caucasus, in violation of the Brest Treaty.

Soviet diplomacy fought hard to put an end to further seizure of Russian territories by German troops. For this purpose it needed, first and foremost, to determine the frontier with the Ukraine. With this aim the Soviet government informed the Ukrainian Central Rada on April 3 of its willingness to conclude a peace treaty with it. This proposal was repeated on April 16 and 22 and on May 4 and 5.[6] The Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists, however, sabotaged the regulation of relations with Soviet Russia, acting in the interests of German imperialism.

At the end of April Germany's predatory policy was exposed by G. V. Chicherin in the Soviet press.[7]

Contrary to the Brest Treaty Germany demanded the return of the Russian Black Sea Fleet from Novorossiisk to Sevastopol, then occupied by the Germans, alleging that its ships had taken part in fighting against German troops.

Not wishing to exacerbate relations with Germany, the Soviet government on April 17 proposed the setting up of a special Russo-German commission to settle and work out in detail all questions concerning the fleet.[8]

On May 11 Lenin drafted a protest to the German government stating that the Soviet government was prepared to settle the question of the Black Sea Fleet in the spirit of the German demands, on

[6] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 245, 257, 281-83.

[7] *Izvestia*, April 23, 1918.

[8] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 246-47.

condition that Germany would give a guarantee to end its offensive in the Crimea and undertake to return the ships of the Black Sea Fleet when the world war was over.

The Soviet government obtained the German government's consent to conclusion of a peace treaty with Finland and the Ukraine,[9] whose claims to Russian territory were used by the Germans as an excuse for continuing aggression against Soviet Russia.

The ideas in Lenin's draft formed the basis of a note dispatched to the German government on May 13, 1918. Soviet diplomacy was guided by these ideas in its subsequent negotiations with the Germans. When, in the middle of June, the conflict with Germany concerning its demand for the return of the ships of the Black Sea Fleet reached a head, Lenin had a telephone conversation with A. A. Joffe, the RSFSR representative in Berlin. The latter described his demarches in Berlin, saying that he had given firm assurances to the German government that the Soviet government would fulfil its obligations on condition that the German side did likewise. After approving Joffe's actions, Lenin informed him that the Soviet government was taking "all possible measures to bring about both the transfer of the ships to Sevastopol and the cessation of military operations".[10] Lenin recommended Joffe: "Continue your policy energetically, patiently and with restraint."[11]

In order to avoid a direct break with Germany, which might lead it to renew open war against Soviet Russia, the Soviet government yielded to the demands of German imperialism as long as this was possible, i.e., as long as these demands did not threaten the sovereignty of the Soviet state.

At the same time the Party and the government resolved to prepare Russia for an armed struggle against the impending armed intervention and internal counter-revolution. On April 22, 1918, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee passed a law introducing universal military training. At the beginning of May 1918 the Soviet government issued instructions to the local Soviets on the organisation of armed resistance to German troops and called on them in the event of an invasion "to fight to the last drop of blood, mobilising and arming the entire adult population of the threatened regions".[12] At the same time Lenin and Y. M. Sverdlov reminded the local Soviets of the need "to build up a powerful socialist army"[13] capable of defending the Soviet Republic against external and internal enemies.

Lenin also urged that use be made of "everything that our diploma-

[9] See: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 359.

[10] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 294-96, 360.

[11] Ibid., p. 360.

[12] Ibid., p. 280.

[13] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 314.

cy can do to delay the moment of war, to extend the respite period". He pointed out that "our military preparations are not yet complete, and our general slogan, therefore, will remain as before—manoeuvre, withdraw, bide our time, and continue our preparations with all our might".[14]

As it proved impossible to reach agreement with the Germans on the question of the Black Sea Fleet, the Soviet government was compelled to order the sinking of the fleet at Novorossiisk to prevent it from falling into German hands. However, even after Germany was deprived of a formal pretext for advancing on Novorossiisk, the advance continued. The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs again delivered a protest to the German government.

The politico-diplomatic struggle of the Soviet government against the territorial aspirations of German imperialism was seriously complicated by the beginning of open armed intervention by the Entente and the USA against Soviet Russia in the spring of 1918 and the revolt of the Czechoslovak Corps.

The German imperialists took advantage of this, presenting the Soviet government with an ultimatum demanding the transfer to Finland of Fort Ino which, together with Kronstadt, covered the approaches to Petrograd.

Thus, Soviet Russia found itself in a very difficult position which was the subject of a special discussion at a meeting of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) on the night of May 6, 1918. Taking into account the serious consequences which war with Germany could have for Soviet Russia, the Central Committee decided to comply with the Germans' demand and hand over Fort Ino to Finland. At the same time it was decided to begin talks with Germany to explore the possibility of concluding peace treaties with Finland and the Ukraine and to do everything possible to expedite their signing, although at that time the conclusion of these treaties meant new sacrifices from the Soviet state.

The Beginning of the Intervention by the Entente and the USA in the North and the Soviet Far East. The Soviet Government's Struggle Against the Intervention

The Allied intervention against Soviet Russia began in spite of all the endeavours by the Soviet government to establish normal relations and achieve a peaceful settlement of all international disputes with the Entente countries and the USA. The intervention had already been decided on by the end of 1917, when on December 23 Britain and France reached agreement on the division of

[14] Ibid., pp. 379, 361.

"spheres of influence" in Russia.

In accordance with this agreement, the imperialist powers immediately began to prepare for an armed invasion of Russia. At the same time they took over the role of organising a civil war in Russia. Whiteguard armies and underground counter-revolutionary organisations were created with their help and their money. Even bourgeois historians are compelled to admit this. Thus, for example, the American professor D. F. Fleming writes: "When the first important gathering of monarchists [was held in Rostov, in the south of Russia, on December 17] ... its leaders were at once offered $ 100,000,000 by the British Government and 100,000,000 rubles by the French to make war on the Soviet Government. Dewitt C. Poole, American Consul-General in Moscow, also went quickly to see the White rebel leaders and reported ... that the United States should support the anti-Soviet cause."[15]

The organisers of the intervention sought to justify this invasion by playing on the "German danger" which Kaiser Germany allegedly presented to Russia, and also by references to the fact that as Russia's "Allies" the Entente powers were "bound" to assist it in the struggle against this danger.

In preparing the armed intervention the Entente powers and the USA proceeded from the fact that the Russian land frontier in Europe was out of their reach due to the presence of German and Austro-Hungarian troops there. The Black Sea would also be closed until Turkey capitulated. Therefore, in 1918, intervention could take place by sea in the north of Russia (Murmansk and Archangel) and in the Soviet Far East, and from there into Siberia.

The Allied intervention began in the North. Its political preparation dated from March 2, 1918, when the British command signed an agreement with the traitor Yuriev (who was Chairman of the Murmansk Soviet and acted with the knowledge of Trotsky, then People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs) "on joint operations to defend the Murmansk Territory against the Germans". The aim of this agreement was to legitimise the landing of interventionist troops in the North of Russia.

The first landing of interventionist troops took place on March 9 in the port of Murmansk. The Allies sought to justify their treacherous invasion of Soviet Russia by referring to the alleged need "to defend the Murmansk Territory against the Germans". In fact, by organising the intervention in the North, the Entente powers and the USA were attempting to create a beachhead for advancing into the heart of Russia with the aim of overthrowing Soviet power.

Parallel with the intervention in the North of Russia they were

[15] D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins. 1917-1960*, Vol. 1, London, 1961, p. 31.

preparing to intervene in the Soviet Far East. Japanese, British and American cruisers had appeared in the port of Vladivostok as early as January 1918. On April 5 on the pretext of "protecting" the Japanese subjects there Japanese troops landed, together with a detachment of British soldiers.

The US Ambassador David Francis announced on April 16 that the Japanese landing "has no political significance, but merely was a police precaution taken by the Japanese Admiral on his own responsibility". He explained that the landing of the British marines followed a request of the British Consul "for the protection of the British Consulate and British subjects in Vladivostok, which he anticipated would possibly be jeopardized by the unrest which might arise from the Japanese landing".[16] On June 29 American infantry were landed in Vladivostok, and from that moment the USA became a direct and active participant in the intervention in Siberia and the Soviet Far East.

In January 1918 the gentry-bourgeois government of Romania, acting on the orders of the Anglo-Franco-American imperialists and with their active assistance, occupied Bessarabia which was an integral part of Soviet Russia.

The seizure of Bessarabia led to a conflict between the Kingdom of Romania and Soviet Russia. Germany was carrying on peace negotiations with Romania in Bucharest at the time and was therefore interested in weakening its partner in the hope of making it more compliant.

In Romania there began arrests of Russian soldiers and the disarming of Russian units which had remained loyal to the Soviet government. On January 14 on behalf of the Soviet government Lenin demanded that the Romanian government release those arrested. At the same time the Council of People's Commissars passed a resolution on the immediate arrest of the Romanian Ambassador to Russia Constantin Diamandi. The Allied diplomatic representatives immediately demanded his release but they did not say a word about the withdrawal of Romanian troops from Bessarabia.

The same day Lenin received the Diplomatic Corps, heard its protest and explained once more that Diamandi had been arrested due to extraordinary circumstances which could not be provided for by any diplomatic norms. Lenin undertook to inform the Council of People's Commissars of the Diplomatic Corps's request concerning the release of the Romanian Ambassador.

The Council of People's Commissars, at a meeting held on the evening of January 14, passed a resolution which read in part: "The Romanian Ambassador is to be released and told that steps to release

[16] *Russian-American Relations. March 1917-March 1920. Documents and Papers*, Harcourt, Brace and Howe, New York, 1920, p. 196.

the Russian soldiers detained by the Romanians must be taken within three days."

However, even after this the Romanian Kingdom continued to pursue its former policy. The Soviet government had no alternative but to announce the severance of diplomatic relations with Romania and the expulsion of the Romanian representatives, and then to take military action. Only after the defeat of a Romanian division did the Romanian government announce its willingness to start negotiations to settle the conflict.

The Soviet-Romanian negotiations took place on March 5-9. They ended with an agreement by which Romania undertook to evacuate its troops from Bessarabia within two months.

However, in spite of this agreement the Romanian government, encouraged by the governments of the Entente and the USA, sought to retain Bessarabia, having secured German assistance as well.

By the Treaty of Bucharest with Germany, signed on May 7, 1918, Germany recognised the annexation of Bessarabia by Romania. The occupation of Bessarabia continued until the end of June 1940, when it was finally returned to the Soviet Union.

The anti-Soviet revolt of the Czechoslovak Corps was also an integral part of the Allied intervention. In the course of the negotiations on the evacuation of this corps from Russia, the Soviet government agreed to the Czechoslovak soldiers leaving Russia. However, the corps commanders reached a secret agreement with Entente representatives with the aim of organising an anti-Soviet revolt. The rank and file were deceived, as the objectives of the Soviet government and its intentions with respect to the Czechoslovak Corps were presented to them in an entirely false light. The plan to use the Corps for the struggle against Soviet power had been drawn up by the Allies at a conference in Jassy in November 1917. The Entente powers and the USA spent a great deal of money and effort on preparing this revolt, which began on May 26, 1918 in Chelyabinsk. The rebels soon captured Penza, Syzran, Samara, Omsk, Tomsk and a number of other towns. In all the areas occupied by them they overthrew Soviet power and put the counter-revolutionary parties in charge of local government.

On June 4 the representatives of Britain, France, Italy and the USA lodged a protest against the action taken by the Soviet government to disarm the Czechoslovaks, calling it "a hostile act aimed against them, because the Czechoslovak detachments are Allied troops and come under the protection and care of the powers of the Entente". The note from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of June 12, 1918 sent in reply revealed the counter-revolutionary nature of the revolt, in which officers of the Entente countries had also taken part. The Soviet government expressed the hope that "the representatives of the Four Powers ... will not delay in condemning the Czechoslovak

detachments, recognised by them as coming under their protection, for their counter-revolutionary armed uprising, which is most blatant and resolute intervention in the internal affairs of Russia".[17]

Lenin played a most active and direct part in the Soviet government's efforts to put an end to the intervention by the Entente and the USA. "In my constant attempts to reach agreement with the Entente," G. V. Chicherin writes, "which even in the event of failure could at least postpone the threatened rupture, I had daily telephone conversations with Vladimir Ilyich, who gave me the most minute advice, displaying wonderful flexibility and skill in parrying the enemy's blows."[18] All the most important steps of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in the sphere of foreign policy were taken on Lenin's instructions or with his knowledge and approval. It is not surprising that in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs they used to say then that "Chicherin's policy is framed by Lenin".[19]

Lenin regarded the development of trade and economic cooperation as an important factor in establishing peaceful relations with the leading capitalist countries, first and foremost, with the USA and Britain.

In accordance with these ideas of Lenin's the Commission on Foreign Trade of the Supreme Economic Council drew up, by May 12, 1918, a plan for the broad development of economic relations with the USA. On May 14 Lenin sent this plan to the US government through Colonel Raymond Robins.[20] The plan contained a detailed list of goods which Russia could sell the USA. Lenin requested Robins to inform the US government of the Soviet proposals for developing trading and economic relations and also enumerated the concessions which could be granted to American capitalists. These included the leasing of coal mines and participation in railway construction in Siberia, in exploiting the sea resources of Eastern Siberia and the North of Russia, in building power stations on the Volkhov and the Svir, etc.[21]

On his return to the United States Robins presented the State Secretary with a report entitled "American Economic Cooperation with Russia". In it he argued the need for developing trade relations and, in particular, proposed the setting up of an Economic Committee which would effect cooperation "with the leaders of Revolutionary Russia actually in power, without regard to their principles or formu-

[17] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 357, 358.

[18] *Reminiscences of V. I. Lenin*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1957, p. 169 (in Russian).

[19] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Chief of the Central Europe Department at the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR to A. A. Joffe, the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, May 21, 1918.

[20] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 286-94, 299-01.

[21] Ibid., pp. 294, 300-01.

las of economic, social, or political life".[22] The US government did not respond either to Robins' report or to the Soviet plan for developing economic relations between the two countries.

Lenin recalled the Soviet proposals to the USA in an interview which he gave to the American journalist Louise Bryant on October 13, 1920. He stated: "I told Americans, Colonel Robins for one, that it was to the interest of the United States to be friendly with Soviet Russia. As long ago as that I pointed out the desirability of commercial relations both from our point of view and America's."[23]

But the US government adhered to its former policy of non-recognition and continued the economic boycott of Soviet Russia.

Notwithstanding this Robins continued to campaign for recognition of the Soviet government in the USA. His statements on the need to establish peaceful and friendly relations between the USA and Soviet Russia retain their relevance to this very day: Robins said that the time would come when relations with the Soviet Union would be a great advantage for Americans, not a great misfortune as they were then regarded. If the Soviet Republic of the working people could gain the upper hand in the economic competition with the American system, let it win. His duty was to see that American lads and Russian peasants did not kill each other any more.[24]

To return to the events of the middle of 1918, it should be noted that the Soviet government took measures at that time to establish trade and economic relations with other states as well, Britain in particular.

Talks were held with the British diplomatic representative Francis Lindley about the dispatch of an economic mission from Britain to establish economic relations between Great Britain and Soviet Russia.[25] Agreement was reached on the sale of platinum to Britain, but the British government prevented the transaction from taking place.[26] It was not the fault of Soviet power that these proposals were not accepted, although a real possibility for economic relations existed. Suffice it to say, that during this period the Soviet government

[22] *Russian-American Relations*, p. 215.

[23] *Lenin Miscellany XXXVII*, p. 254.

[24] See the journal *Zvezda*, No. 1, 1967, p. 190. After Lenin's death Raymond Robins planted a "Lenin tree" in his garden in Florida, which outlived its owner, who died in 1955. Robins was very anxious to visit the Soviet Union. In 1924 he visited the Soviet representative in Berlin, and in the spring of 1933 he visited the USSR. On his return to the USA Robins announced that the United States should definitely recognise Russia, because it was undoubtedly in its interest to do so. He repeated this conclusion in the report which he sent to President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

[25] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 396.

[26] S. Y. Vygodsky, op. cit., p. 121.

concluded more than twenty major transactions with Sweden and trade was also promoted with Denmark.[27] The Soviet government took measures to establish trade and economic relations with Japan and China.

At the same time the Soviet government was waging a politico-diplomatic struggle against the intervention of the Entente and the USA. With the help of notes and statements addressed not only to foreign governments and ministries, but also to the peoples of the whole world, it exposed the true aims of the armed intervention in Russia. In addition through the radio and the press it called upon the peoples of all countries to struggle for peace, explained the Soviet peace programme to them and systematically informed public opinion about the peace proposals which it was making to the Entente powers and the USA.

On May 20 and June 6, 1918 the Soviet government sent the governments of Entente powers and the USA notes of protest against the presence of Allied warships in the coastal waters of northern Russia. In a Note of June 14 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs demanded that Britain, the USA and France should remove their warships from the harbours of the White Sea coast.

The Soviet government also struggled hard to put an end to intervention in the Soviet Far East as quickly as possible. A government communique of April 5 said: "... The imperialist blow from the East, which has long been in preparation, has been struck. The Japanese imperialists are out to stifle the Soviet revolution, to cut Russia off from the Pacific Ocean, to seize the rich expanses of Siberia, and to enslave the Siberian workers and peasants. Bourgeois Japan is acting as the Soviet Republic's mortal enemy."[28]

Lenin's directives to the Vladivostok Soviet of April 7 stressed the need to create armed forces for the struggle against the invasion. Lenin warned that the Japanese would be helped by the other Allied powers.[29] And this really did happen. On April 23 a statement by the French Ambassador to Russia, Joseph Noulens, in which he approved of the Japanese intervention was published in the Soviet press. Such a public declaration was tantamount to political support of the Japanese intervention on the part of France. It goes without saying that the Soviet government could not allow a person who had approved of a hostile action against Soviet Russia to remain in Moscow as the French Ambassador. It therefore demanded that the French government recall Noulens at once.[30]

In a Note of April 25 addressed to the Allies, the People's Commis-

[27] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 718.
[28] Ibid., p. 225.
[29] Ibid., pp. 233-34.
[30] Ibid., pp. 271-73.

sariat for Foreign Affairs exposed the complicity of the French, British and US Consuls in Vladivostok in a plot to overthrow Soviet power.[31] The next day the Commissariat demanded that the governments of the Entente and the USA define clearly their attitude to the counter-revolutionary Autonomous Siberian Government and instruct their representatives in Russia that it was incompatible with their position to support gangs of counter-revolutionary conspirators.[32]

Extension of the Allied Intervention. Soviet Peace Proposals to the Allies

On July 2, 1918, the Allied Supreme War Council resolved to extend the intervention in Russia. On July 31 the British landed in Onega. They then shelled the approaches to Archangel and took the town on August 5. New detachments of Japanese, British and American troops arrived in Vladivostok in August. At the same time British troops, operating from Iran invaded Turkestan and Transcaucasia. On August 4 they landed in Baku. On September 20 they brutally murdered twenty-six Baku commissars, shooting them in the Transcaspian desert. Describing the situation, Lenin wrote in August 1918: "The external foe of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic at present is British, French, American and Japanese imperialism. This foe is attacking Russia, is plundering our territory...."[33]

At the same time under the guidance of the Allied diplomats the underground counter-revolutionary forces became active. The most dangerous of the anti-Soviet conspiracies was the Lockhart plot, discovered by organs of the Cheka (All-Russia Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage) in Moscow. The British diplomat Bruce Lockhart planned it with the participation of the French and US Consuls. In Petrograd the conspirators were led by the British Naval Attache Cromey.

The Cheka succeeded in rendering the conspirators harmless and foiling their cunning plans, which, as it emerged at the trial, aimed at organising a counter-revolutionary coup in Moscow and Petrograd and physically exterminating leaders of the Party and the Soviet government, first and foremost, Lenin. The same sort of activity was carried on by Entente and US diplomatic representatives who had meanwhile moved to Vologda. Armed, financed and directed by the Allies, the Russian counter-revolution committed a number of foul terrorist acts (among them the murder of Uritsky and Volodarsky). On August 30 a villainous attempt was made to assassinate Lenin, who was severely

[31] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 265-66.

[32] Ibid., pp. 268-69.

[33] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, Moscow, 1974, p. 54.

wounded. At the same time the Allies were increasingly tightening the iron ring of the famine blockade around the Land of Soviets, supplementing it with diplomatic isolation. Under their pressure all the neutral countries recalled their representatives from Russia and expelled the Soviet representatives from their countries.

While offering armed resistance to the external and internal enemies who had united in a joint struggle against Soviet power, the Soviet government did not abandon its attempts to put an end to the war by diplomatic means. Thus, on August 5, the day the British took Archangel, it delivered a Note to the US Consul Dewitt C. Poole which said that the Allies had invaded Russia without the slightest grounds for so doing and without declaring war. The Soviet government stated that it was not declaring war and that it desired to live in peace, and wanted to know what claims Britain had on Soviet Russia.[34]

In a Note of October 24 to US President Woodrow Wilson the Soviet government exposed the actions of the imperialists, announced its willingness to enter into peace negotiations with the Allied powers and requested the USA and the Entente countries to communicate their terms for the conclusion of peace with the Soviet state.[35]

On November 3 it again proposed that the governments of the Entente and the USA should end military operations.[36]

On November 6 the Sixth Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets passed a special resolution inviting the governments of the USA and the Entente powers, and also Japan, to start peace negotiations and authorised the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to take the necessary steps to this end.[37] This resolution was broadcast several times by radio for the information of all governments and peoples throughout the world.

Soviet-German Negotiations on the Conclusion of a Supplementary Treaty

Even more important for Soviet Russia in 1918 than preventing a war with its former allies was the preservation of peace with Germany, as there were huge German and Austro-Hungarian armies in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic and Finland. It was therefore essential for Soviet Russia to see that the Brest Treaty was not ruptured and to avoid a major military conflict with Germany. "Salvation now lies not in an open rupture of the Brest Treaty but in the ability to manoeuvre in the complex international situations that have arisen

[34] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 418-19.

[35] Ibid., pp. 538-39.

[36] Ibid., p. 549.

[37] Ibid., p. 556.

from the conflicting interests of the various capitalist countries," Lenin emphasised. "One must take into account the relations between Japan and America, Germany and Britain, the dissension in the German capitalist and war parties, and so on."[38]

In spite of the extremely difficult position in which the young Soviet Republic found itself in spring 1918, Lenin firmly believed in the stability of Soviet power and its ultimate triumph over external and internal enemies. This is confirmed, inter alia, by the German Envoy to Moscow, Count Wilhelm Mirbach, in one of his reports to Berlin. Reporting on his talk with Lenin, Mirbach wrote on May 16, 1918, that Lenin had spoken with great optimism and faith in the victory and stability of Soviet power in Russia. "Lenin firmly believes in his lucky star and continues invariably to preserve his boundless optimism," Mirbach wrote in this report.[39]

Lenin believed that economic relations could play an important part in preventing a new campaign by Germany against Soviet Russia, because Germany was in great need of raw materials and food. An attempt had to be made to set the interests of German industry and commerce against the war party. "If," Lenin wrote on June 2, 1918, to the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin Joffe, "the German merchants steer towards economic advantages in the realisation that they can get *nothing* out of us by war, because we'll burn *everything*, your policy will continue to be successful. We can give the Germans raw materials."[40] Chicherin remarked later that "the principal means of our diplomatic action in Berlin in that most difficult first period was to get German business circles interested in economic cooperation with the Soviet Republic".[41]

A plan for attracting foreign capital into various branches of the economy of Soviet Russia was submitted to the German representative in Moscow. The Soviet mission in Berlin also took active steps to extend economic relations with Germany. In a letter of July 3, 1918, Joffe wrote to Lenin: "The policy I am pursuing here on your instructions is the logical and inevitable outcome of the decision to win a respite at all costs."[42]

The task of Soviet foreign policy was not confined to preventing an open military conflict with Germany. It was also extremely important to put an end to the abnormal situation in which the German imperialists were continuing to seize Russian territory, taking advantage of the fact that the Brest Treaty did not define the frontiers of the

[38] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 382.

[39] *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, I. Heft, Stuttgart, 1968, S. 80.

[40] *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*, pp. 46-47.

[41] *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Vol. 2, p. 168.

[42] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin to Lenin, July 3, 1918.

temporarily occupied areas to the east of the territories taken away from Russia and did not lay down the frontiers of Soviet Russia with the Ukraine and Finland.

In the German imperialists the Soviet government had encountered a perfidious and cunning foe, who made use, among other subterfuges, of faded "self-determinations" to seize more territory. With the help of these "self-determinations" they deprived Russia of large areas (for example, Georgia and the Crimea), declaring them to be "independent" states. Therefore it was most important to establish "the final limits of German, Austro-Hungarian and Turkish occupation in all parts of Russia and the frontiers of Finland and the Ukraine". This is how the Soviet Note of May 13, 1918, framed the task of the Soviet-German negotiations. On Lenin's initiative the Soviet government invited the German government at the beginning of May 1918 to open negotiations on political, economic and financial questions.

Germany agreed to these negotiations, because it realised by then that it could not take by force the amount of grain and industrial raw materials that it required from the occupied Russian territories. The ground under the feet of the German occupiers was ablaze with the fire of a people's war. Under the guidance of the Bolshevik Party the patriotic war of liberation of the Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, the peoples of the Baltic regions and the Caucasian peoples against the German, Austro-Hungarian and Turkish occupiers was constantly spreading. The people's war thwarted German plans for plundering Russia. Moreover, the German imperialists were also interested in negotiations with the Soviet government for financial reasons: they planned to advance claims under the pretext of covering losses suffered by the Germans in Russia and to establish the amount to be paid for the maintenance of Russian prisoners of war, which was provided for by the Brest Treaty. Relevant committees consisting of representatives of the two parties were set up to conduct the negotiations which were held in Moscow and Berlin.

The Soviet delegation at these negotiations was headed by the Deputy People's Commissar for Trade and Industry of the RSFSR, M. G. Bronsky. Lenin attached very great importance to these negotiations. By the time they opened the Soviet government had worked out a broad programme of development of Soviet-German trade and economic relations. This programme, as Bronsky confirms, was drawn up with Lenin's active participation.

Moreover, on May 15 just before the beginning of the Soviet-German negotiations, Lenin had a talk with Bronsky, read the theses of his report and approved them. He instructed Bronsky to be the first speaker and to outline the above-mentioned programme.[43]

Referring to the special role of Lenin in drawing up this pro-

[43] See: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 44, Moscow, 1975, p. 478, note 56.

gramme, Bronsky said: "Our main line on the question of restoring economic relations with Germany had already been clearly and definitely outlined in 1918, by none other than Comrade Lenin."[44]

The Economic Committee began its work in Moscow on May 15. At its very first meeting Bronsky read out the programme of trade and economic co-operation of Soviet Russia with Germany, declaring his willingness to continue and extend economic relations with Russia's former allies also. In so doing he emphasised that he had been authorised "to state the basic features and substance of our economic policy", and also to describe "the main principles on the basis of which the resumption of our mutual trade relations would be possible". The first of these principles provided that "in the interests of economic rehabilitation, Russia, as a neutral country, must resume economic relations with the Central Powers and, at the same time, continue and, where possible, extend such relations with the Allied countries".[45] In addition, Germany was to renounce all intervention in the economic policy of the Soviet state, recognise the nationalisation of foreign trade and banks, not intervene in the economic relations of the RSFSR with the Ukraine, the Baltic area and the Caucasus, and grant credit to Russia. Given the observance of these terms, and also of Soviet legislation, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR agreed to grant Germany concessions in various industries, including the timber industry. Trade and concessions were to be based on the equal rights and mutual advantage of both parties.[46]

Furthermore the Soviet government demanded that Germany withdraw its troops from Russian territories.

In the course of the negotiations the Soviet representatives stressed that Soviet Russia would fulfil its obligation under the Brest Treaty to pay Germany certain sums for the maintenance of Russian prisoners of war and compensation for nationalised German property, but they repeatedly stated that Soviet Russia would not pay "a single kopeck until the actual war is stopped and the losses sustained by us after March 3 are elucidated".[47]

Lenin's idea that in the situation of the continuing imperialist war Soviet Russia should pursue a policy of neutrality and support trade and economic relations with all the countries of the German bloc, and also with the Entente powers and the USA, was actively implemented by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Thus, Chicherin's letter of June 3, 1918 to M. M. Litvinov, the Soviet representative in

[44] Central State Archives of the October Revolution, f. 5283, op. 6, d. 57, l. 46 (henceforth CSAOR).

[45] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 673.

[46] Ibid., p. 677.

[47] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, April 1918.

Britain, read in part: "While offering economic deals to Germany we are offering similar deals to the Entente countries. We have enough raw materials and even semi-manufactured goods for both sides. To both sides we have stated that we can make it profitable for them and that instead of trying to strangle us they would do better by doing business with us."[48] Chicherin's instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, Joffe, in his letter of July 2, 1918, also testify to the consistent pursuing of an independent policy and strict observance of neutrality. In connection with Joffe's enquiry addressed to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs as to the position of the Soviet government on the possibility of German troops passing across our territory to fight against Britain in the Near and Middle East, Chicherin wrote: "I think it is absolutely superfluous to issue instructions on obvious questions, because you cannot doubt the fact that we can neither invite the Germans here nor turn ourselves into a springhold for German imperialism, and we have no intention of taking the road of a Rada or a Georgia."[49]

Thus, the Soviet government pursued an independent policy of strict neutrality and did not assist the Germans in their fight against the Entente, as Allied diplomats and politicians slanderously averred.

The Soviet-German negotiations were seriously complicated by the murder of the German Envoy to Soviet Russia, Count Mirbach, on July 6, 1918, and the Socialist-Revolutionary revolts in Moscow, Yaroslavl, Rybinsk and other towns, in the course of which the insurgents advanced the provocatory demand that war be declared on Germany immediately. Mirbach was killed by a Socialist-Revolutionary, Blyumkin, who had behind him not only the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, but also the Entente imperialists who were seeking to provoke an attack on Soviet Russia by Germany. These events constituted for Russia the serious threat of being drawn into a new war with Kaiser Germany. On July 14 Germany's acting diplomatic representative in Moscow K. Riezler delivered a Note to the Soviet government with unprecedented demand that it allow a battalion of German soldiers into Moscow to "guard" the German Mission.

In this hour of mortal danger Lenin personally undertook the settling of the conflict with Germany: he visited the German Mission and expressed condolences to the German government on behalf of the Soviet government. He also gave the necessary instructions concerning this question to the Soviet representative in Berlin.[50]

In doing his utmost to settle this conflict peacefully and swiftly,

[48] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from G. V. Chicherin to the Soviet Ambassador in Britain, June 3, 1918.

[49] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from G. V. Chicherin to the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, July 2, 1918.

[50] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Fifth Russian Edition, Vol. 50, p. 113.

Lenin never for a moment lost his composure and stamina. In order to discuss the situation a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee was called on July 15, at which Lenin spoke. He stated that the government refused categorically to agree to Germany's demand to bring in a battalion of German soldiers, because this demand affected the sovereignty of the Soviet state. Soviet Russia, Lenin stated, was fulfilling strictly and conscientiously the obligations imposed upon it by the harsh terms of the Brest Treaty and was willing to fulfil its financial obligations also, but "there are limits beyond which even the most peace-loving masses of the working people will be compelled to rise, and will rise, as one man, to defend their country with arms in hand".[51]

Lenin's firm stand, combined with as many concessions as possible, played a positive role: the German government did not insist on its demand that a troop battalion be sent to Moscow, and then appointed as its new diplomatic representative the eminent banker and statesman Hilferich. In so doing it tacitly admitted that it considered the incident closed.

Nevertheless, even after Hilferich's arrival in Moscow Soviet-German relations remained tense because of his orders that the German diplomatic mission be transferred to Pskov, which was then behind the demarcation line, i.e., territory occupied by German troops. Hilferich's act was seen in the foreign press as tantamount to breaking off diplomatic relations between Germany and Soviet Russia. Lenin regarded the situation as extremely serious. Through Chicherin he ordered the RSFSR representative in Germany, A. A. Joffe, not to leave Berlin in order to avoid intensifying the rumours of a break between the two countries.

In this situation the Soviet-German negotiations on economic and political questions that were being held in Berlin became perceptibly complicated. For final agreement on certain outstanding questions it was essential that Joffe should go to Moscow. L. B. Krasin spoke to Lenin on the need for this journey. Krasin stressed that the German government was insisting on the rapid solution of the remaining issues and had declared its willingness to sign a Russo-German treaty if agreement were reached on these points. Only after this report from Krasin did Lenin allow Joffe to return to Moscow for a few days. Thus, thanks to the persistence and flexibility shown by Soviet diplomacy, the lengthy Soviet-German negotiations were completed.

On August 27, 1918, the Russo-German Supplementary Treaty consisting of three agreements, political, financial and legal, was signed.

This treaty provided for the immediate formation of Russo-German commissions to demarcate the neutral zones between Russian

[51] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 540.

and German troops. This was of considerable importance, because it was bound to make it more difficult for the Germans to continue to extend arbitrarily the occupation zone of Russian territories. Special mention must be made of Clause 4, under which Germany undertook to cease intervening in relations between the Russian Soviet state and its separate areas and gave an assurance that "it will neither provoke nor support the formation of independent state organisms on these territories". This undertaking was specified in such a way that Germany agreed "to exert its influence to ensure that the creation of independent state organisms" within the borders of the former Russian Empire "was not supported by military measures from the territory of the Ukraine". The special reference to German operations from Ukrainian territory is explained by the fact that the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists were used by the Germans as an obedient tool for presenting territorial claims to Soviet Russia (the Don region, the Kursk region, the Crimea, etc.). The German government undertook as soon as the Supplementary Treaty was ratified to exert its influence on the Turkish government to ensure that Turkish troops were withdrawn from Baku and the adjoining area. The Soviet government undertook to supply Germany with one quarter of the oil produced in Baku in exchange for coal from the Donets Basin, and the German government to take measures to ensure that Soviet Russia received manganese ore from Georgia. Germany agreed to exert its influence on the Finnish government to ensure that it released captured Finnish Red Guards and allowed them to go to Russia.

The Soviet government did not succeed in obtaining Germany's consent to the evacuation of the Donbas. But Germany did undertake "to act in such a way as to enable Russia, under a peace treaty with the Ukraine, to receive a part of the Donets Basin in proportion to its economic requirements and to ensure that the Ukraine allocated part of its iron ore output for export to Russia". In addition, Germany agreed to clear the Rostov-Voronezh railway and withdraw from the town of Rostov, and also to allow the transportation of loads and goods for the RSFSR along the railways from Taganrog to Rostov and from Taganrog to Kursk, which were then in the German-occupied zone.[52]

Germany granted the RSFSR for commercial purposes the right of transit through the Baltic area and "free harbours" in the ports of Revel, Riga and Vindava, and also guaranteed that there would be no invasion of Russian territory, and above all of Petrograd, on the part of Finland. Germany also undertook to withdraw immediately from a number of Russian territories occupied by it. In particular, it undertook to withdraw its troops from the territories east of the Berezina River in proportion to payments made by the RSFSR under the financial agreement.

[52] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 443.

Under the financial agreement the RSFSR undertook to pay Germany 6,000 million marks over various periods. This sum included payment for the maintenance of prisoners of war and compensation for losses incurred by Germany and its citizens as a result of the annulment of loans and the nationalisation of German property in Russia.

Soviet Russia had to pay: 1, 500 million marks in gold and banknotes in instalments by December 31, 1918; 1, 000 million marks in deliveries of goods on the basis of a special agreement covering the period between November 15, 1918, and March 31, 1920; a sum of 2,500 million in bonds of a special 6 per cent loan secured by state revenues, in particular by rent for concessions granted to Germans in Russia. With regard to the payment of the final 1,000 million, the agreement said that if the Ukraine and Finland refused to take responsibility for paying it, the procedure of payment should be determined by a special agreement. It was also agreed that Germany would exert its influence on the governments of the Ukraine and Finland to ensure that they take upon themselves part of the Russian financial obligations with respect to Germany.[53]

In spite of the fact that the treaty of August 27 imposed heavy financial obligations on Soviet Russia and was linked with other sacrifices, its conclusion was a definite achievement for Soviet diplomacy. Even our enemies were forced to admit this. Thus, for example, the German Consulate in Moscow which, after the German Mission moved from Moscow to German-occupied Pskov, performed the functions of the German Embassy, described the treaty as reflecting "a strengthening of the position of the Soviet government in the political and even the strategic sphere, in the economic, moral, and particularly international respects, and the reinforcement of the Bolsheviks at home and abroad".[54] The Consulate noted in particular that the treaty of August 27 dealt a strong blow at the Russian whiteguards, who had been banking on Kaiser Germany in the srtuggle against Soviet power in Russia.[55]

This treaty strengthened the tendency in German ruling circles to maintain peaceful relations with Russia, because only then could Germany hope to receive payment.

The treaty of August 27 weakened the position of the extreme group of the war party, which at that time considered it essential to

[53] In practice only the first instalment was paid—in October 1918. The Soviet government then dispatched 83,533 kilograms of gold to Germany, which the Entente powers appropriated after Germany's defeat in spite of their statements that they did not recognise the Brest Treaty.

[54] Historico-Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR (henceforth HDA). Report of the German Consulate in Moscow, September 10, 1918.

[55] Ibid.

sever relations with the Soviet government in order to begin a "big" war with the aim of overthrowing Soviet power in Russia. On August 6, 1918, Ludendorff informed State Secretary Paul von Hinze that the German Army Command could assign six or seven divisions for a war against Soviet Russia. He suggested beginning an offensive simultaneously on Moscow and Petrograd. Ludendorff's plan was actively supported by Hilferich, who directed his activities as German representative in Soviet Russia not towards normalising Soviet-German relations and developing trade and economic relations, but towards severing relations with the RSFSR.

On August 10, 1918, Hilferich arrived in Berlin. The aim of his visit was accurately defined at the time by A. A. Joffe. "Hilferich has come here with the firm conviction that Bolshevism is on the point of collapse," he reported to Moscow from Berlin on August 22, "and with a plan to persuade the others not to have anything to do with the Bolsheviks and to prepare elements with whom it would be possible to work."[56]

Despite Hilferich's objections the Supplementary Treaty was signed. But Hilferich did not give up the struggle: he went to General Headquarters where he had talks with Ludendorff and Hindenburg. In addition, on August 21 Hilferich delivered a memorandum to Reichschancellor in which he proposed breaking off relations with the Soviet government and establishing relations with anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia. Proceeding from this, Hilferich insisted on the rejection of the Supplementary Treaty. When this treaty was signed on August 27, Hilferich resigned.

The payment of large sums of money over two years was a bitter material sacrifice. But this concession by the Soviet government under the treaty of August 27, like the others, was essential and justified. Describing this treaty at a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on September 2, 1918, Chicherin said that the agreements "fix the tribute which we pay for our revolutionary legislation, which we can now continue in peace, and at the same time partly fix and partly limit the results of the German offensive against us, which the Brest-Litovsk Treaty gave wide scope for further manifestation, and on certain points, in particular the question of the evacuation of our territories, which is now beginning, these treaties represent a significant improvement in our position".[57] The treaty of August 27 strengthened Soviet Russia's position in respect of Turkey which was then seeking to annex large areas in the Caucasus. The treaty was also essential because by concluding it Soviet Russia obtained certain freedom of

[56] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, August 22, 1918.

[57] *Izvestia*, September 4, 1918; see also *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 467.

action for the struggle against the Entente intervention which had grown much stronger by then. Recalling the lengthy and difficult negotiations with Germany, begun on Lenin's proposal, Chicherin wrote: "Vladimir Ilyich carefully followed all the ins and outs of these negotiations, combining timely concessions with firmness in cases when it was necessary to limit the excessive demands of the other side."[58]

The Soviet government strictly observed the obligations which it had undertaken and demanded that Germany should also adhere to the provisions of the treaty. The latter, however, violated the treaty grossly. Thus, for example, it did its utmost to delay the withdrawal of troops from the occupied Russian territories. Moreover, German troops looted the evacuated areas. The Soviet government repeatedly issued firm protests in this connection. A Note from the Mission in Berlin dated October 29 stated that the Soviet government could see no other way out of the situation than to delay payment of the current instalment under the financial agreement "until everything that has been evacuated, requisitioned and taken away by the German occupation authorities from the regions left by them has been returned to its place".[59]

In a telegram from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of October 30 to the German government the Soviet government again declared its willingness to perform its obligations, but demanded the same of Germany.[60]

Continuing systematically to violate the treaty, the German government sent far-fetched protests with accusations against the Soviet government. It alleged, in particular, that the Soviet side was violating Clause 2 of the Brest Treaty, which forbade the carrying on of propaganda. The Germans produced no serious evidence of this, confining themselves to complaints concerning critical comments in the Soviet press about Germany.

The Soviet government rejected such unfounded claims, stressing at the same time that it "desires most resolutely to observe good-neighbourly relations and peaceful coexistence with Germany, despite all the differences in the systems of the two states".[61]

The Soviet government exerted great efforts to put an end to Turkish aggression in the Caucasus, where, contrary to the Brest Treaty, Turkish troops had seized Baku. On September 16 it demanded the immediate evacuation of Baku, but the Turkish government refused to comply with this legitimate request.

In response to this gross violation by Turkey of its treaty obliga-

[58] *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Vol. 2, p. 167.

[59] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 544.

[60] Ibid., p. 545.

[61] Ibid., p. 488.

tions the Soviet government on September 20 informed Turkey that it regarded the Brest Treaty "as null and void and no longer existing between Turkey and Russia".[62]

Germany Severs Relations with Soviet Russia. The Annulment of the Rapacious Brest Treaty

In the autumn of 1918 panic broke out in German ruling circles. German imperialism was heading for military and political disaster. Germany's aggressive policy in relation to Soviet Russia not only hastened the defeat of the German army in the West, but also helped to aggravate the political crisis at home. The Kaiser's government sought feverishly for a way out of the situation. Each day it became more convinced of the need to end the war in the West as soon as possible, in order to avert the impending revolutionary storm and, under the flag of the struggle against Bolshevism, to conclude a compromise peace with the Entente at the expense of Soviet Russia. This plan was discussed in the middle of October by the War Council.[63] It was approved by the Right-wing leader of the German Social-Democrats, Philipp Scheidemann.[64]

German ruling circles began to look for a suitable pretext for severing relations with Soviet Russia, in order to begin a war against it together with the Entente and the USA. On October 28 this question was discussed by the German government. Scheidemann, now an Imperial Minister, was forced to admit that "there is not sufficient evidence to take decisive measures against the Russian Embassy". He gave "advice" on how to obtain material to justify the expulsion of the Soviet Ambassador and his staff. "An open infringement of its extraterritorial status should be avoided," he said; but if, for example, "the courier's box were to be accidentally broken on the way, it might be possible to obtain material. It might be possible to demand the recall of the present Ambassador, which does happen in international practice."[65]

The German police soon organised the provocation recommended by Scheidemann. On November 4 they seized all the luggage of the Soviet diplomatic courier who had just arrived in Berlin, and then announced that one box had been damaged and found to contain leaflets of a revolutionary nature. The same day the German gov-

[62] G. V. Chicherin, op. cit., p. 114.

[63] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report from the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin to G. V. Chicherin, October 17, 1918.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Günter Rosenfeld, *Sowjetrussland und Deutschland 1917-1922*, Berlin, 1960, S. 129.

ernment announced that it was severing relations with Soviet Russia and expelling the Soviet Ambassador and the staff of all other Soviet offices, including the Red Cross Mission. They left Berlin on November 6, 1918.

Thus the German government provoked the severance of Soviet-German relations. Describing this act, Lenin said on November 8, 1918: "When Germany expelled our Ambassador she acted, if not in direct agreement with Anglo-French policy, then hoping to do them a service so that they should be magnanimous to her. The implication was that we are also fulfilling the duties of executioner against the Bolsheviks, your enemies."[66]

But the German government did not succeed in improving its position by severing relations with Soviet Russia.

Events did not proceed as the Imperial government and the ruling classes had hoped. Germany was like a powder keg, which needed only a spark to explode. This spark was the naval mutiny in Kiel. It marked the beginning of the revolution in Germany. On November 9, 1918, it did away with the imperial monarchy. On November 11 the World War ended with the signing of an Armistice at Compiègne.

The beginning of the revolution and Germany's defeat in the war enabled Soviet Russia to free itself from the onerous Brest Treaty which had been forcibly imposed upon it. By a decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of November 13 the Brest Treaty and all the agreements proceeding from it were annulled. This decision testified to Soviet Russia's willingness to normalise relations with Germany and Austria-Hungary on the basis of equal rights and to conclude a fraternal alliance with the peoples of these countries.

Thus, the Brest Treaty, as Lenin had foreseen, proved to be short-lived. Lenin had given an example of using the contradictions in the imperialist camp in the interests of peace and of strengthening Soviet Russia. "Brest-Litovsk was significant," he wrote, "in being the first time that we were able, on an immense scale and amidst vast difficulties, to take advantage of the contradictions among the imperialists in such a way as to make socialism the ultimate gainer."[67]

The breathing-space which Soviet Russia had obtained as a result of the Brest peace had been a short one, but it had been enough to start building the Red Army. In this period, as Lenin frequently pointed out, "we have secured a breathing-space; true, it cost us incredible effort, but during this breathing-space our workers and peasants have taken a tremendous step forward to socialist construction".[68] This was expressed in the completion of the nationalisation of the most important branches of the economy: industry, banking, tran-

[66] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, Moscow, 1974, p. 160.

[67] Ibid., Vol. 31, Moscow, 1966, p. 439.

[68] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 511.

sport and foreign trade. In this period also the industrial management was reorganised, registration and control were introduced in the distribution of output, and the procurement of grain and other food was organised. All this and many other historic gains of the workers and peasants found embodiment in the first Soviet Constitution—the Constitution of the RSFSR, which was adopted by the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in July 1918.

The conclusion of the Brest Treaty marked the beginning of a new stage in the struggle for peace. Although Soviet Russia withdrew from the imperialist war and obtained a breathing-space, its position continued to remain extremely difficult and dangerous. The Soviet state was encircled by the imperialist powers. In these conditions the only possible policy for Soviet Russia was manoeuvre and retreat. Young Soviet diplomacy under Lenin's guidance did its utmost to avoid a battle and to delay the inevitable attack by imperialism, to prolong the breathing-space which it had obtained. Diplomatic manoeuvring and exposure of the aggressive policy of the two imperialist groups were combined with energetic activity by the Soviet government to build up new armed forces. The breathing-space made it possible to put an end to Soviet Russia's lack of armed forces.

For Soviet foreign policy the whole period of the Brest breathing-space was a time of intense struggle to avoid a total break with the Entente. The latter organised an armed intervention in Russia with a view to overthrowing Soviet power and restoring bourgeois rule. All attempts by the Soviet government to establish peaceful relations with Russia's former allies were unsuccessful.

At the same time Soviet diplomacy did all it could to prevent the continued military and economic offensive of German imperialism. Outlining the tasks of Soviet diplomacy, G. V. Chicherin wrote in 1919 that it was waging a daily, hourly struggle to "halt this offensive or to direct it into a channel which does not threaten the existence of Soviet Russia, in general, to put an end to the uncertainty stemming from the Brest Treaty and finally fix relations with Germany".[69] Following Lenin's instructions on the possibility of and need for compromises in politics, Soviet diplomacy made substantial concessions and sacrifices for the sake of stopping the military offensive of German imperialism. The Russo-German Supplementary Treaty of August 27, 1918, was a result of this policy.

In the circumstances the conclusion of this treaty was a farsighted and wise step. It became inevitable because of the hostile policy of the Entente powers and the USA with respect to the Soviet state. The treaty of August 27 put an end to the German imperialist advance into the heart of the Soviet land. While making concessions, as Chicherin wrote in November 1919, the Soviet government never allowed

[69] G. V. Chicherin, op. cit., pp. 102-03.

Germany to intervene "in the internal system of Soviet Russia".[70] "... The policy which we were obliged to pursue at the time of the Brest Peace, a most brutal, violent and humiliating peace, proved to be the only correct policy that could have been pursued."[71] This is how Lenin summed up in March 1919 the results of the Soviet government's policy during the period of the operation of the Brest Treaty.

The strengthening of Soviet power in Russia during the Brest breathing-space is a most important historical factor. It became possible only because Lenin and Soviet foreign policy directed by him made skilful use of the international situation at that time in the interests of Soviet Russia.

The breathing-space was used by Soviet Russia in order to prepare for the bitter and long struggle against the intervention begun by the Entente. At the same time the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet government waged a persistent political and diplomatic struggle to expose Germany's policy of aggression. As Lenin remarked, "the workers' and peasants' government has done more than any other government in the world to weaken the German imperialists, to tear the German workers away from them".[72] This was an important contribution by the Soviet state to the speedy ending of the world war. By raising high the banner of peace and socialism, Soviet Russia won the respect and love of the working people of the whole world over.

Events proved Lenin's political calculation to be correct—Soviet Russia was burdened by the Brest Treaty for about eight months only.

[70] Ibid., p. 101.
[71] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Moscow, 1965, p. 62.
[72] Ibid., Vol. 27, p. 479.

CHAPTER IV

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN THE PERIOD OF ARMED INTERVENTION AND THE CIVIL WAR

(November 1918-March 1921)

The Change in the International Situation After the End of the First World War

Germany's defeat in the First World War and the beginning of the German revolution which led to the overthrow of the Kaiser and his government changed the international situation radically, and with it Soviet Russia's international position also changed. It could now annul the predatory Brest Treaty and begin an open military and political struggle to drive the German invaders out of the Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian and other regions occupied by them. Moreover, the revolution in Germany was a powerful stimulus, which accelerated the upsurge of the revolutionary movement in Europe, and this led to the strengthening of Soviet power in Russia and improved the position of the Soviet state.

But, on the other hand, the defeat of Germany meant the establishment of the supremacy of the Entente powers and the USA in Europe and Asia and, consequently, an increase in the resources which they could use for launching an anti-Soviet armed intervention. The governments of the Western powers now had free armed forces which were numerically far superior to those of the Soviet state. Analysing the new position in which Soviet Russia found itself, Lenin said: "... We have never been in such a dangerous situation as we are now. The imperialists were busy among themselves, but now one group has been wiped out by the Anglo-French-American group, which considers its main task to be the extermination of world Bolshevism and the strangulation of its main centre, the Russian Soviet Republic."[1] The threat to the Soviet Republic had increased considerably. The Entente and USA imperialists were now free to organise a blockade of the Soviet state, and also to extend armed intervention. On November 23-27, 1918, Anglo-French troops landed in Novorossiisk, Sevastopol and Odessa.

Plans for armed intervention in Russia were drawn up by the command of the Allied armies. One such plan was dated November 12, 1918. It read in part, as follows:

"It is essential to destroy Bolshevism....

"It is also important to obtain a good guarantee for Russia's debts

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 160-61.

to the Entente."[2]

This plan outlined in detail the most important directions of the intervention in Russia and estimated the armed forces at the Entente's disposal for this purpose.

The interventionist designs of the Entente imperialists were set out in even greater detail in a memorandum by the Supreme Allied Command, dated January 18, 1919, on the need for an Allied intervention in Russia. It declared:

"If the Entente wishes to retain the fruits of its victory, achieved with such difficulty, it must itself bring out the regeneration of Russia by overthrowing Bolshevism and setting up a strong barrier between this country and the central powers.

"The intervention, which pursues this aim, is a vital necessity for it, and the political difficulties arising from the intervention cannot be decisive in either renouncing the intervention or postponing it...

"The Bolshevik regime is incompatible with the establishment of a lasting peace.

"For the powers of the Entente it is vitally necessary to destroy it as quickly as possible; their collective duty is to unite their efforts for this purpose.

"In carrying out the plan of action which they have to adopt, the obligations of each of them should evidently be distributed as follows:

"Britain: Operations in North Russia and in the Baltic area. Participation in the intervention in Poland. Operations in Southeast Russia with the aim of joining up the armed forces of Siberia with the armies of Denikin and Krasnov. The organisation of these armies.

"USA: Operations in Poland (direction of Allied operations).[3]

"France: Operations in both Siberia and the Ukraine. Organisation of the Polish army.

"Italy: Participation in the operations in the Ukraine.

"It is essential to reach agreement without delay for the following purposes: to establish the principles of intervention in Russia, to specify the distribution of obligations, and to ensure a single leadership."[4]

The enemies of the revolution were planning to attack the first proletarian state with all their might in order to strangle it. The question for them was what form the armed struggle should take and under what slogans it should be carried out. The old slogan of "defend-

[2] *From the History of the Civil War in the USSR. Documents and Materials*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1960, p. 57 (in Russian).

[3] US claims also extended to the Soviet Far East and Siberia. These regions were the object of a bitter Japanese-American struggle.

[4] *From the History of the Civil War in the USSR*, Vol. I, pp. 83, 87. This Memorandum was evidently drawn up for the Paris Peace Conference which opened on January 18, 1919, and at which it was proposed to examine the "Russian question" also.

ing Russia against the Germans" was no longer suitable. It was now impossible for them to conceal the true aims of intervention and deceive the peoples of their own countries with such slogans. Germany had now been defeated and thus the reason originally given by the Western states for their armed invasion of Russia was no longer valid.

Then there appeared the slogan of defending "the Russian Allied friends" who were in territories occupied by foreign troops, which meant giving support and material, military and financial assistance to the whiteguard and nationalist counter-revolutionary governments on Russian territory. The imperialists invaded Russia without declaring war and in spite of the Soviet government's repeated proposals for establishing peaceful relations with all states. In 1918 the Soviet government addressed peace proposals to the Entente powers and the USA on seven different occasions. In particular, peace proposals were made in a letter from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the American Consul Dewitt C. Poole dated August 5, in a Note to President Wilson dated October 24, in an address to all the Entente countries of November 3, which was delivered through the representatives of neutral countries, in a resolution of the Sixth Congress of Soviets of November 7, and in a circular letter from Litvinov to the representatives of the Entente countries in Sweden of December 23, 1918. In 1919 the Soviet government's peace proposals were set out in wireless messages to the governments of the Entente countries on January 12 and 17, in a Note to the same governments of February 24, in a draft agreement presented to the American representative William C. Bullitt, and in a declaration of May 7 delivered by Fridtjof Nansen, a friend of Soviet Russia.

In its foreign policy communications the Soviet government addressed itself not only to the governments of these powers, but also to their peoples. By showing them the aggressive intentions of imperialism, the true meaning of the foreign policy of the capitalist states, the Soviet government helped the peoples to understand the international situation.

The Anti-Soviet Plans and Manoeuvres of the Entente During the Paris Conference. Soviet Diplomacy in the Struggle Against Intervention in 1919

The conference which was convened by the victors of the First World War in Paris in the middle of January 1919 to conclude peace with Germany and its Allies was to a large extent turned by them into the headquarters for carrying out plans of armed intervention in Russia's affairs. The aim of this intervention was to destroy Soviet power

and dismember and enslave Russia.

On February 15 at the conference Winston Churchill, then Britain's War Minister, proposed the setting up of a special body (the Allied Council for Russian Affairs), which would direct the struggle of the international counter-revolution to overthrow Soviet power in Russia. This council was to "consider the practical possibilities of joint military action" against Soviet Russia, in which alongside the Entente countries and the Russian whiteguards the troops of the bourgeois states bordering on Russia would also take part.[5] Churchill's proposal was supported by the Commander of the Allied troops Marshal Foch, who outlined a scheme for "a vast attack on Soviet Russia by Finns, Estonians, Letts, Lithuanians, Poles, Czechs, Russians—in fact, all the peoples that lie along the fringe of Russia—all under Allied direction".[6] "These young troops," Foch announced at a meeting of the Allied Supreme War Council on February 25, 1919, "in themselves not well organised,... would, if placed under a unique command, yield a total force sufficient to subdue the Bolshevik forces and to occupy their territory. If this were done, 1919 would see the end of Bolshevism."[7]

Alongside the growing armed intervention in Russia the governments of the USA and Britain increased their diplomatic activity aimed at strangling the power of the working people and depriving Russia of economically and strategically important areas.

On October 30, 1918, President Wilson of the United States approved the commentary on the USA's "peace programme" (Wilson's Fourteen Points) published on January 4, 1918. This commentary, by which the American delegation at the Paris Conference was to be guided, contained, in particular, a carefully drawn-up programme for the dismemberment of Russia (commentary on Point 6). "The essence of the Russian problem then," this commentary read, "in the immediate future would seem to be: 1. The recognition of provisional Governments. 2. Assistance extended to and through Governments."[8] By provisional governments was meant the whiteguard governments and governments of bourgeois nationalists and separatists. The commentary envisaged the elimination of Russia as a great power, which was in the interests of American and British imperialism, and the secession of the Baltic area, Byelorussia, the Ukraine, the Caucasus,

[5] Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis. The Aftermath*, Vol. V, London, 1929, pp. 173-74.

[6] David Lloyd George, *The Truth About the Peace Treaties*, Vol. I, London, 1938, p. 370.

[7] *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference. 1919*, Vol. IV, Washington, 1943, p. 122.

[8] *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House. The Ending of the War*, Arranged by Charles Seymour, Vol. IV, Houghton Nifflin Co., Boston and New York, 1928, p. 203.

and Central Asia. All these areas were to become colonies of Western imperialism. Speaking of Central Asia, for example, the authors of the commentary wrote: "It may well be that some power will have to be given a limited mandate to act as protector."[9]

Further evidence of the USA's striving to dismember and enslave Russia is a map compiled by the State Department of the USA in January 1919 and the appended "Draft of the Preliminary Report and Recommendations, Prepared by the Information Division in Accordance with Instructions, for the President and Plenipotentiary Representatives". This draft served as guidance for the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. The map and aforementioned document were published in the diary of the member of the American delegation, D. Miller.[10] The draft declared that the whole of Russia should be divided into large natural regions, each with its own economic life, and that none of them should be independent enough to form a strong state. But the Entente powers not only planned Russia's dismemberment, they also intended to create along the frontiers of the RSFSR a belt of states hostile to Russia, which would hinder communication between the Soviet Republic and the European countries and serve the aims of the economic blockade.

The French Prime Minister Clemenceau was the first to use the term "*cordon sanitaire*". He announced hypocritically that "the inter-allied plan of action is not of an offensive character, but it simply interdicts to the Bolsheviks access to the Ukraine regions, the Caucasus, and Western Siberia", which were the backbone of their economy.[11]

In November 1918, in connection with Germany's capitulation, the Entente countries and the USA gained access to the Baltic. This gave them the possibility of intervention in the Baltic area. The Western regions of Russia, including the Baltic area, were occupied at that time by German troops. After Germany's defeat the question arose of the withdrawal of its troops from these territories. However, the Entente and US imperialists realised that the withdrawal of German troops from the Baltic area would mean the immediate restoration of Soviet power there, because the majority of the population sympathised with the Bolsheviks and had supported them as far back as 1917. Thus, in Latvia at the elections for the Constituent Assembly that were held in November 1917 the Bolsheviks had

[9] Ibid., p. 204.

[10] D. Miller, *My Diary at the Conference of Paris*, Vol. IV, New York, 1924, pp. 219-20. A detailed description of the map is given in A. Y. Kunina's book *The Collapse of US Plans of World Domination in 1917-1920* (Moscow, 1954, pp. 95-100, in Russian). The map was published in *Izvestia* for November 3, 1960 (Moscow evening edition).

[11] *Russian-American Relations, p. 273.*

obtained 72 per cent of the votes.[12] It is not surprising that in the above-mentioned commentary to Point 6 the fear was expressed that the withdrawal of foreign troops from these territories might be accompanied by Bolshevik revolutions there.

This explains why, during the signing of the armistice of Compiègne with Germany on November 11, 1918, the victorious powers stipulated in it (Clause XII) that Germany should keep its troops in the Ukraine and the Baltic area for as long as the Entente countries and the USA considered it necessary. US Secretary of State Robert Lansing declared point-blank that "the Allied and Associated Governments were, by the Armistice, Allies of Germany in the Baltic provinces".[13]

The question of Germany's participation in the intervention in Russia was also considered at an Anglo-Franco-American conference held in London in December 1918. It was recognised that it would be possible to "lay hands on Russia" only with the help of Germany. It was also stated at the conference that Germany would gradually make the transition "from cruel strife to natural co-operation with all of us", and resolutions declared "that Germany shall be invited to aid in the liberation of Russia and the rebuilding of Eastern Europe".[14]

Thus the victorious powers concluded an alliance with their enemy of yesterday, Germany, for the destruction of Soviet power in Russia, the Baltic area, in particular. In Germany extremely influential circles were planning to organise a joint military campaign of the German army with the armies of the Entente, the USA and Poland against Soviet Russia. With the help of this campaign they hoped not only to eliminate the "Bolshevik threat" from Russia, but also to get better peace terms from the victorious powers. One such plan was drawn up by Stulpnagel on January 23, 1919, on the instructions of the German Supreme Command.[15]

Taking advantage of the fact that Russia, encircled on all sides, was being forced to defend itself against the enemy on several fronts simultaneously and therefore could not give enough assistance to the Baltic peoples, the imperialists at the beginning of 1919 succeeded in overthrowing Soviet power in the Baltic area, where it had been restored by the people over a large section as soon as German imperialism was defeated. The Entente military missions together with the

[12] *Essays on the History of the Communist Party of Latvia, 1893-1919*, Vol. I, Riga, 1962, p. 408 (in Russian).

[13] *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The Paris Peace Conference. 1919*, Vol. IV, p. 691.

[14] Winston S. Churchill, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 25.

[15] *Soviet-German Relations from the Negotiations in Brest-Litovsk to the Signing of the Rapallo Treaty. Collected documents, 1919-1922*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1971, pp. 46-48 (in Russian).

commander of the German troops in the Baltic area, the bloodthirsty General von der Goltz, behaved here as if in their colonies.

The invaders set up in the Baltic area the reactionary Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian governments consisting of bourgeois nationalists. These were puppet governments which did not enjoy the trust of the peoples and rested on foreign bayonets.

The desire to put an end to Soviet Russia united all the leaders of imperialism, but they disagreed on tactical questions. Clemenceau, Foch and Churchill insisted on the unconditional continuation of the military intervention, whereas Wilson and Lloyd George doubted that Soviet Russia could be defeated by military means alone. They were worried by the increased resistance of the Soviet people and the growth of the revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries. It soon became clear that the Entente troops dispatched to the North, the Black Sea coast and the Soviet Far East were quite insufficient to conquer Soviet power. It was difficult to send new formations because of home policy considerations: the peoples were tired of war, the workers sympathised with the Russian revolution, and the movement against the intervention was growing. The Entente was forced to rely mainly not on its own troops, but on the forces of the Russian counter-revolution and the armies of the so-called border states, which had been set up under Allied direction. However, many Entente politicians expressed doubts as to the ability of the whiteguards to get the better of the Red Army. During the meeting of heads of delegations from the USA, Britain, France, Italy and Japan in Paris on January 16, 1919, Lloyd George, explaining his initiative in inviting the Soviet government and other "governments" of Russia to the peace conference, admitted that "the hope that the Bolshevik Government would collapse had not been realised. In fact, there is one report that the Bolsheviks are stronger than ever, that their internal position is strong, and that their hold on the people is stronger.... It is also reported that the peasants are becoming Bolsheviks". Referring to Kaiser Germany, which had not succeeded in conquering Russia in spite of the fact that it sent a million-strong army there for that purpose, Lloyd George drew attention also to the danger of unrest in the armies of the Entente, including the British army. If he now "proposed to send a thousand British troops to Russia for that purpose," he said, "the armies would mutiny. The same applies to US troops in Siberia; also to Canadians and French as well. The mere idea of crushing Bolshevism by a military force is pure madness".[16] Therefore Wilson and Lloyd George insisted on turning to diplomatic methods in the struggle against Soviet power.

In January 1919 Lenin wrote: "The bourgeoisie and the governments of the Allied countries seem to be wavering. One section sees

[16] *Russian-American Relations*, p. 285.

that demoralisation is already setting in among the Allied troops in Russia, who are helping the whiteguards and serving the blackest monarchist and landlord reaction. It realises that continuation of the military intervention and attempts to defeat Russia—which would mean maintaining a million-strong army of occupation for a long time—is the surest and quickest way of carrying the proletarian revolution to the Allied countries....

"Another section of the Allied bourgeoisie persists in its policy of military intervention, 'economic encirclement' (Clemenceau) and strangulation of the Soviet Republic."[17]

The Soviet government took into account this disagreement in Allied ruling circles on methods of struggle and worked out corresponding tactics. Describing these tactics of Leninist diplomacy, G. V. Chicherin wrote the following at the time to the RSFSR representative in Sweden, V. V. Vorovsky: "With respect to the Entente, our Note addressed to Wilson [a Note of October 24.—*Ed*] combines several opposing aims and, together with agitation, takes account of the fact that we should by no means rule out the possibility of buying ourselves out as we did in Brest, moreover we take into account the clash of interests among the Entente. It is in this sense that we are trying to take concrete steps now, and have already taken some both in relation to France and in relation to America through unofficial channels—and hope to do the same in different directions as well."[18]

While resisting the armed intervention organised by the Entente and the USA the Soviet state at the same time advanced peace proposals. The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs had already been given as its main task "to continue the policy of constant, systematic presentation of proposals to all the governments which were attacking us to begin the peaceful settlement of relations with us on the basis of reciprocal sovereignty and mutual non-interference".[19]

The Red Army's military successes, the Soviet peace initiatives, and also the growing international solidarity of the working class which was demanding an end to the intervention, compelled the leaders of the Entente powers and the USA at the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919, while continuing military intervention, to seek also for new, peaceful forms of struggle against Soviet Russia. The USA was the initiator of these peaceful forms of struggle.

On January 22, 1919, at a meeting of the Council of Ten, the text of a message to all "belligerent groups" in Russia, drawn up by Wilson, was made public. It proposed that all the "organised groups"

[17] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 435.

[18] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from G. V. Chicherin to the Soviet representative in Sweden of October 29, 1918.

[19] *Ten Years of Soviet Diplomacy*, Moscow, 1927, p. 10 (in Russian).

which exercised or sought to exercise political power or military control in any part of the territory of Russia should send their representatives, by February 15, to Prinkipo in the Sea of Marmara, on condition that for this period an armistice be declared between the invited parties and military operations be ceased. The conference of these representatives with the plenipotentiaries of the great powers should discuss the question of restoring peace in Russia.[20] The Soviet government did not receive an official invitation to the conference, however, whereas one was sent to the whiteguard "governments". Wilson's plan, which was approved by the Council of Ten, i. e., all the Allies, was to divide up Russia among the Russian whiteguards and the bourgeois nationalists of the other nations of the former Russian Empire.

It was a cunning plan drawn up by bourgeois diplomacy. Naturally the capitalist governments still had no intention of renouncing interference in Russia's internal affairs or granting its peoples the right of deciding their destiny as they wished. The very fact that the bourgeois governments accepted the idea of negotiations with the government of Soviet Russia testified to the strengthening of the international position of the Soviet state, which was upholding its independence in the mortal combat with international imperialism.

In connection with the afore-mentioned message by the Paris Conference, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin sent a radiogram to Wilson in Paris on January 28, 1919, informing the US President that the Soviet government had not received an invitation. Chicherin informed Wilson that he was drawing his attention to this fact "so that the absence of an answer on our part should not be misinterpreted".[21] But even after this statement the Soviet government did not receive an invitation.

On February 4, 1919, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs addressed a note by wireless to the governments of Great Britain, France, Italy, the USA and Japan. It said: "Notwithstanding the increasingly favourable position of Soviet Russia from both the military and the internal points of view, the Russian Soviet Government attaches such great value to the conclusion of an agreement which would bring hostilities to an end that it is ready immediately to enter into negotiation for this purpose, and even—as it has often said—to purchase such agreement at the price of important sacrifices, with the express reservation that the future development of the Soviet Republic will not be menaced." Stressing its willingness to carry on

[20] *Current International Policy in Treaties, Notes and Declarations*, Part II, Moscow, 1926, pp. 219-20 (in Russian).

[21] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 52. The statement of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs was most opportune, because reports had begun to appear in the bourgeois press that the Bolsheviks were refusing to take part in the conference.

negotiations with the powers of the Entente and even with the white-guard authorities, the Soviet government asked where, when and by what route it could dispatch its representatives.[22]

The consent of the RSFSR to take part in a conference, in spite of the fact that it would be compelled, if the conference took place, to accept the demand for an armistice, i. e., to halt the then successful offensive of the Red Army, testified to the peace-loving nature of its foreign policy, and to the desire of the Soviet government to make it possible for the peoples of Russia to build a peaceful life. The Soviet answer was a fine example of profound analysis of the domestic and international situation and trends of its development.

The whiteguard governments, following the instructions of the champions of intervention in the ruling circles of the Entente, refused to negotiate with the Soviet government. They were hoping for a successful offensive by Kolchak's troops. Wilson and Lloyd George realised that their manoeuvre had failed. They were compelled to change their tactics and renounce the idea of holding a conference which they had themselves proposed.

After the failure of this diplomatic manoeuvre by British and American imperialism, the influence of the extreme militarists and interventionists grew in the camp of the Allied powers. Churchill was particularly insistent on extending the intervention. He continued to demand that a plan of concerted military operations against the Soviet state be drawn up.

However, the imperialist governments could not ignore the fact that in the duel with Soviet diplomacy they had been morally defeated and had appeared to the peoples in the role of opponents of peace negotiations. Therefore Wilson and Lloyd George made yet another attempt to ensure success by diplomatic methods. The American diplomat William C. Bullitt was sent to Moscow and arrived there on March 8, 1919.

He had been instructed to investigate the possibility of concluding peace between Soviet Russia, the Entente powers and the whiteguard "governments" and to draw up an agreed draft of terms for a peaceful settlement. The Soviet government's view of the programme for a peaceful settlement had already been outlined in a letter from M. Litvinov and V. Vorovsky to Dr. Ludwig Meyer, a barrister of the Norwegian Supreme Court, published in the London newspaper *The Herald* on February 22, 1919.[23] The ending of the foreign intervention in Russia, this letter said, would also mean an end to the Civil War in the country.

For the sake of establishing economic and technical cooperation the Soviet government expressed its willingness to re-examine some

[22] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, pp. 58, 60.
[23] *Russian-American Relations*, pp. 274-76.

of its decrees concerning Russia's financial obligations to individual countries, without, however, touching upon the main principles of its economic and financial policy. It intended to pay special attention to the interests of small foreign creditors.

The Soviet government promised to refrain from carrying on propaganda in the Allied countries which might be regarded as interference in their internal affairs.

In return Soviet Russia demanded: the ending of all military operations, the ending of direct or indirect support of all the forces attacking the Soviet government, the ending of the economic war and boycott. The American and British proposals which Bullitt brought to Moscow contained very unfavourable political and economic terms for Russia. According to the opinion of the organisers of Bullitt's mission, the main point of the agreement was to be the preservation of the status quo in Russia resulting from foreign military intervention and the emergence of the so-called governments of Kolchak, Denikin and other counter-revolutionaries. In the course of the negotiations in Moscow, in which Lenin took an active part, the Soviet government succeeded in softening the Allies' terms and obtaining substantial amendments.

Initially the text proposed by Bullitt made the withdrawal of Entente troops from Russia dependent on the demobilisation of the Red Army.[24] Moreover, the question of ending aid to whiteguard governments by the imperialist powers was omitted entirely.

The Soviet government rejected Bullitt's proposals in their initial form. As a result of negotiations with Bullitt an agreed text of peace proposals was drawn up. It provided (Point 1) for "all existing de facto governments which have been set up on the territory of the former Russian Empire and Finland to remain in full control of the territories which they occupy at the moment when the armistice becomes effective ... until the peoples inhabiting the territories controlled by these de facto Governments shall themselves determine to change their Governments".[25] Moreover, the draft also stated that "immediately after the signing of this agreement, all troops of the Allied and Associated Governments and other non-Russian governments to be withdrawn from Russia and military assistance to cease to be given to anti-Soviet Governments which have been set up on the territory of the former Russian Empire".[26]

[24] The English terms of the agreement provided for "all allied troops to be withdrawn from Russia as soon as Russian armies above quota to be defined have been demobilised and their surplus arms surrendered or destroyed" (*The Bullitt Mission to Russia. Testimony Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, of William C. Bullitt*, New York, 1919, p. 37).

[25] *The Bullitt Mission to Russia*, p. 40.

[26] *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919, Russia*, Washington, 1937, p. 79.

In spite of the fact that the agreement provided for the whiteguard "governments" to remain in control of the territories which they occupied, the Soviet government was ready to carry on peace negotiations on the basis of the draft in order to save the peoples from the horrors of war. This step again testified to the love of peace of Soviet power, which was willing to purchase peace at such a high price.

The economic terms of the draft brought by Bullitt were also unacceptable to Soviet Russia. In the course of the Moscow negotiations the Soviet government succeeded in improving these terms considerably. Nevertheless the compromise terms were also extremely onerous for the Soviet country. Economic questions were dealt with in points 2, 3 and 4 of the draft. "The economic blockade to be raised," Point 2 read, "and trade relations between Soviet Russia and the Allied and Associated countries to be re-established under conditions which will ensure that supplies from the Allied and Associated countries are made available on equal terms to all classes of the Russian people."

This clause meant in practice that the Entente powers were agreeing to raise the blockade and re-establish trade relations between Soviet Russia and the outside world only on condition that the Soviet government accepted the Entente powers' control over the distribution of food and other goods from the countries in question. Thus, the terms of this clause encroached upon the sovereignty of the Soviet state.

Point 3 provided that the Soviet governments would obtain "the right of unhindered transit on all railways and the use of all ports which belonged to the former Russian Empire and to Finland and are necessary for the disembarkation and transportation of passengers and goods between their territories and the sea".

Under Point 4 the Soviet government agreed, on a reciprocal basis, to allow the free entry of foreign citizens into Soviet Russia, and also the right to reside there and to move about freely in complete safety on condition that they did not interfere in internal affairs. Because of the enormous devastation of Russia's economy and the tense domestic situation, consent to free entry into Soviet Russia was extremely undesirable: the Entente could take advantage of it to debase the currency and render material and moral support to the defeated, but not yet entirely destroyed, Russian counter-revolution. The Soviet government expressed its willingness on certain conditions to make some concessions on the question of the annulment of old debts for the sake of ending the war and establishing treaty relations with the Allied countries.

During his stay in Russia Bullitt had every opportunity to acquaint himself with the state of affairs in the Soviet country. As a result of his observations he came to the conclusion that at that time "no government save a socialist government can be set up in Russia today

except by foreign bayonets, and any governments so set up will fall the moment such support is withdrawn". Bullitt was also convinced that in Russia "the Soviet form of government is firmly established" and that it had "evidently become to the Russian people the symbol of their revolution". Therefore Bullitt suggested that before it was too late peace should be concluded with the revolution in the person of the Soviet government and recommended that the Soviet compromise proposals be accepted. In this connection he wrote: "No real peace can be established in Europe or the world until peace is made with the revolution. This proposal of the Soviet Government presents an opportunity to make peace with the revolution on a just and reasonable basis—perhaps a unique opportunity."[27]

However, when Bullitt returned to Paris with this compromise draft, it emerged that Wilson and Lloyd George had already lost interest in it. This change of attitude by the American and British governments was explained by the change in the situation. It was at this time (the first half of March) that Kolchak's offensive began, on which the Entente placed great hopes. In this connection it was decided not to send the Soviet government a reply to the proposals brought by Bullitt. Thus the imperialists again wrecked the peace negotiations. On May 26, 1919, the Supreme Allied Council informed Kolchak that they were "disposed to assist the government of Admiral Kolchak and his associates with munitions, supplies, and food to establish themselves as the government of all Russia, provided they receive from them definite guarantees that their policy has the same object in view as the Allied and Associated Powers".[28]

The bourgeoisie feared the influence of the victorious Russian revolution and a possible victory of the revolution in the countries of Western Europe. The Soviet Republic in Hungary, proclaimed in March 1919, provoked a new burst of anger from the imperialists and increased their fear. The same means were employed against Soviet Hungary as against Soviet Russia—economic blockade and armed intervention.

After receiving a report of Kolchak's military successes, Wilson and Lloyd George did not return to the discussion of their own plan of negotiations taken to Moscow by Bullitt. Lloyd George publicly announced that he knew nothing about Bullitt's visit to Moscow. This was a blatant lie, but Wilson refused to refute it when Bullitt requested him to do so.[29]

[27] *The Bullitt Mission to Russia*, pp. 51, 54.

[28] *Russian-American Relations*, p. 337.

[29] Bullitt himself, and after him certain bourgeois historians also, were forced to describe the true facts of the matter and, consequently, to reveal the hypocrisy and falsity of Wilson's and Lloyd George's diplomacy. "The story of Prinkipo has repeated itself in a new form," the American historian Schuman rightly remarked about Bullitt's mission (Frederick Lewis Schuman, *Ame-*

Twice during the early months of 1919 the imperialist leaders attending the Paris Conference, which was actually the headquarters of the world counter-revolution, advanced peace proposals and then themselves retracted them.

The de facto recognition, which followed soon afterwards, of Kolchak's "government" by the USA, Britain, France and Italy provided further confirmation of the fact that they were counting on armed struggle against Soviet Russia.

The imperialists' hopes concerning Kolchak were in vain. He was defeated. In the summer of 1919 Denikin began his "crusade against Moscow"; the Entente sought to support his offensive by organising counter-revolutionary blows on other fronts also. The representatives of the USA, Britain and France launched a particularly active campaign in the Baltic area. But the Entente leaders regarded German troops as the most reliable force against the revolutionary movement. In has already been said above that under the armistice terms Germany undertook to keep its troops in the Baltic area for as long as the victorious powers deemed it necessary. In the Treaty of Versailles signed on June 28, 1919, this condition was confirmed. Thus, the governments of Britain, the USA and France drew defeated Germany into the struggle against the Soviet state. First and foremost, it was to crush the revolutionary forces of the Baltic peoples.

The Entente powers sought to turn the Baltic countries into active participants in the anti-Soviet campaigns. On August 26, 1919, a meeting of representatives of all the counter-revolutionary forces of these countries was held in Riga. It was chaired by the British General Peyton C. March, then in charge of the Allied Mission in the Baltic. The meeting was attended by representatives of the whiteguard Russian General Yudenich, the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish bourgeois governments, and also the 50,000-strong army of the whiteguard Bermondt, who now commanded most of the German troops in Latvia and Lithuania. It was decided to begin a joint offensive against the Soviet state on September 15, 1919, in support of Denikin.[30]

While Denikin was advancing on Moscow from the south, the imperialists sent Yudenich's army from the west against Petrograd. The counter-revolutionary forces of Estonia and Latvia also took part in the campaign. The imperialist aggressors and their local agents spread the slanderous rumour that Soviet Russia was encroaching upon the rights of the Latvians and Estonians to decide their own destiny. With the help of lies and force they hoped to turn the small states into the hangmen of the Russian revolution. Churchill boasted

rican Policy Towards Russia since 1917. A Study of Diplomatic History, International Law and Public Opinion, New York, 1928, p. 134).

[30] V. J. Sipols, *Behind the Scenes of the Foreign Intervention in Latvia*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 157-58 (in Russian).

about the campaign of the "fourteen states" against the Soviet Republic.

However, the Entente imperialists did not succeed in implementing fully the decision of the August meeting. An important part in preventing this was played by the peace proposals presented by the Soviet government in late August and early September 1919 to the bourgeois governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Churchill wrote on September 15, 1919, that "the elements existed which, used in combination, would easily have been successful. They have, however," he was forced to admit, "been dissipated.... Every proposal to establish a unified system of command and direction of the resistance to the Bolsheviks has been vetoed".[31]

Examining the strategy of the interventionists, Lenin wrote: "The first attempt of the Entente to defeat us with its own forces ended in victory for us. The second attempt consisted in launching against us nations which are our neighbours and which are entirely dependent financially on the Entente, and in trying to force them to crush us, as a nest of socialism."[32] Simultaneously with the armed intervention the Entente powers pursued the policy of economic blockade of the Soviet state, seeking to strangle the socialist revolution in Russia with the bony hand of famine. By making use of their tremendous power, the governments of the victorious countries compelled other countries to join in the blockade of Soviet Russia. Such a proposal was made by the Entente governments to Germany in a Note of August 21, 1919. On behalf of the Entente countries Clemenceau addressed a similar appeal on October 10, 1919, to Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Finland, Spain, Switzerland, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela. These countries were invited to refrain from sending ships to Soviet ports, to forbid banks to perform operations with Soviet Russia, and to cease postal, telegraphic and wireless communications with it. Pressure was also brought to bear on the Baltic states. In this connection Soviet diplomacy was confronted with an important task: to prevent the Scandinavian and Baltic states, and also Germany, from joining in the blockade, and thereby to stop the Entente and the USA from encircling the Soviet state with the iron ring of blockade. On October 20, 1919, the Soviet government broadcast by radio a Note addressed to the German government in which it warned Berlin strongly of the serious consequences for Germany in the event of its joining the blockade. By broadcasting this Note over the radio the Soviet government was addressing itself to all the peoples of Europe, informing them of the truth concerning the fact that the Entente powers and the USA "have invaded Russian territories by all the paths open to them; they are stirring up against

[31] Winston S. Churchill, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 256.

[32] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, Moscow, 1965, p. 158.

Russia all the governments subject to their influence and in all possible ways—by the sending of troops, military equipment and financial means—they are supporting the whiteguard counter-revolutionary bands which seek to subject Russia to the most bloody reaction". It stressed that "in the course of its hostile actions against the Russian masses the Entente powers have, in addition, applied against them a system of barbaric blockade with the aim of breaking the power of resistance of the Russian masses by all manner of hardships, to which women and children are also subjected".[33]

In conclusion the Note said that the Soviet government would regard Germany's joining in the blockade as a consciously hostile act and would reserve the right to take any corresponding measures it deemed necessary. A similar note was sent to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland and Switzerland.

The German government could not fail to take account of this warning. Therefore in its reply to the victorious powers it refused to take part in the blockade, expressing doubt that it would be successful. Other countries simply kept silent, in so far as trade with Russia was extremely necessary for them.

While carrying on the political and economic blockade of the Soviet state, the Entente powers actively drew up plans for a concentric attack on Soviet Russia: Kolchak from the east, Denikin from the south, the troops of the interventionists and General Miller from the north, and Yudenich, the White Poles and the Baltic bourgeois nationalists from the west.

However, the bourgeois governments of the Baltic states did not want to fight against Soviet Russia. Describing their policy, Lenin said that "they waited, temporised, wrote Notes, sent delegations, formed commissions, sat in conference, and did so until Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin had been crushed and the Entente defeated in the second campaign too".[34] It is greatly to the credit of Soviet foreign policy that the Baltic states were prevented from taking part in the anti-Soviet war.

Soviet Diplomacy in Preparing Peace with the Baltic States

On August 31, 1919, the Soviet government proposed peace negotiations to the government of Estonia. On September 11 a similar proposal was sent to the governments of Lithuania, Latvia and Finland. The communication of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs stated that "aggressive intentions of any kind have always been alien to Soviet Russia. It adheres to the principle of the self-determination"

[33] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 265.
[34] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 388-89.

of nations. The Commissariat stressed that "the methods of imperialism and of the bourgeois predatory state are abhorrent" to Soviet Russia.[35] The Soviet government proposed peace.

It was no easy task to conclude peace with the small countries, when Britain, the USA and France were doing their utmost to keep them in the aggressive anti-Soviet camp. The ruling circles of the Baltic countries had adopted a hostile position in relation to Soviet Russia and were following the political course of the West. Soviet diplomacy was thus confronted with a complex task. It had to start peace negotiations with the Baltic countries and at the same time show their peoples both the possibility of reaching an agreement with Soviet Russia based on equal rights and also the danger of continuing the policy of war against it which their ruling circles were pursuing at the dictates of the imperialists.

The imperialist powers watched the behaviour of the small countries most vigilantly. As soon as the Estonian government agreed to begin peace negotiations with Soviet Russia, the Entente and the USA immediately made Estonia feel the force of their strong hand. Thus, on September 20, 1919, Phillipps, US Acting Secretary of State, announced: "As the Department understands food was furnished to Estonia in exchange for obligations of that Government, it would seem proper that further supplies ... should cease."[36]

Analysing the methods of anti-Soviet struggle employed by the leaders of the largest capitalist states, Lenin said: "It is well known what pressure the Entente brought to bear on those small countries that had hastily formed, and were weak and wholly dependent on the Entente even in such basic questions as that of food and in all other respects. They cannot break away from that dependence. All kinds of pressure—financial, food, military—have been applied to force Estonia, Finland, and no doubt Latvia, Lithuania and Poland as well, to force that whole group of states to make war on us."[37] Under this pressure the Estonian bourgeoisie hesitated.

But then Yudenich's White forces, which were using Estonia as their base, were smashed by the Red Army. Denikin was defeated too. This changed the general situation, increased the fears of the bourgeoisie in Estonia, and in the Baltic countries as a whole, of war against Soviet Russia, and greatly facilitated the work of Soviet diplomacy aimed at establishing peaceful relations. As a result of lengthy negotiations an agreement on the suspension of hostilities was signed between Soviet Russia and Estonia on December 31, 1919, and between Soviet Russia and Latvia on January 30, 1920. On February

[35] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 247.

[36] *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. 1919. Russia*, Washington, 1937, p. 712.

[37] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 175.

2, 1920, in the town of Yuriev (Tartu) a peace treaty with Estonia was signed, which was ratified two days later by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. This was the first peace treaty concluded by the RSFSR with a European state. By this treaty the RSFSR recognised "unconditionally the independence and sovereignty of the Estonian State", and also renounced Estonia's portion of the Russian debts, and handed over to Estonia fifteen million gold roubles and all the ships of the Russian navy which were in Estonia's hands at the time of the signing of the treaty.[38]

The Soviet-Estonian Treaty was a great triumph for Soviet foreign policy. This treaty marked the beginning of the establishment of normal diplomatic relations between Soviet Russia and the neighbouring bourgeois states of Europe.

Shortly afterwards negotiations began on the conclusion of peace treaties with Lithuania and Latvia. They ended with the signing of treaties between the RSFSR and Lithuania on July 12, 1920, and between the RSFSR and Latvia on August 11, 1920.

One of the most difficult tasks of Soviet diplomacy was the establishment of peaceful relations with Finland, where power was in the hands of the most reactionary bourgeois circles. These circles were planning to seize Russian territories—not only Karelia and Pechenga but even Petrograd, the Onega area and the Kola Peninsula. From the spring of 1919 the Finnish bourgeois press actively propagated the idea of a campaign to take Petrograd. In April Finnish volunteers and regular units invaded the Olonets Gubernia. Finnish aircraft carried out raids on Petrograd. But this armed adventure soon suffered total defeat.

After this ruling Finnish circles realised that on the strength of their own forces alone they would not be successful in their struggle against Soviet Russia. The Finnish government therefore concluded an agreement with Yudenich.

On June 21, 1919, the British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour in Paris wired Lord Curzon the text of an agreement which had been concluded between the Finnish government and General Yudenich in Helsingfors on the question of Finland's advance on Petrograd.[39]

The Finnish government rejected the Soviet proposal to open up peace negotiations made on September 11, at the time when the Entente was trying to stir up the "fourteen states", which included Finland, against Soviet Russia. Moreover, the Finnish reaction sought to realise its territorial claims by organising a new invasion of Karelia by whiteguard detachments.

True to its policy of establishing peaceful relations, the Soviet

[38] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 348.

[39] *Documents of British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939.* First Series, Vol. III, London, 1949, pp. 394-95.

government repeatedly renewed its proposal to begin armistice negotiations. The Finnish side prevented the opening of negotiations by presenting a number of blatantly unacceptable preliminary terms. It was almost a year before the Finnish government finally accepted the Soviet proposal. The negotiations, which began in Yuriev (Tartu) on June 12, 1920, were completed on October 14 with the signing of the Yuriev Peace Treaty.

Addressing a meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on June 17, 1920, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR, G. V. Chicherin, said that "world imperialism, i. e., in fact all the capitalist governments of the whole world, are acting against us not only with force, not only with military offensives, but also with diplomatic manoeuvres, not only with open attacks, but also under the guise of love of peace, under the guise of friendly actions which demand on our part constant caution, the greatest vigilance".[40]

Subsequent events confirmed the truth of these words. Thus, even after the signing of the peace treaty the Finnish reaction continued to plan the seizure of Soviet Karelia. To this end in October 1921 the White Finns carried out another armed invasion of Karelia. This too ended in the total defeat of the aggressors.

The conclusion of the peace treaties with Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Finland meant that Soviet diplomacy was successfully breaking the *cordon sanitaire* erected by the Entente round Soviet Russia.

By this time the bourgeois Czechoslovak government had been compelled, taking into account the defeat of the interventionists, to evacuate from Russia the Czechoslovak Corps which had been taking part in the struggle against Soviet power since May 1918. On February 7, 1920, an agreement was signed between representatives of the command of the Soviet Fifth Army and the Czechoslovak Corps.

Clause 6 of the agreement stipulated that the Russian gold reserves were to remain the property of Soviet Russia and were to be handed over to the Irkutsk Executive Committee when the last Czechoslovak troop train left Irkutsk.

On January 16, 1920, the Supreme Allied Council passed a resolution allowing the exchange of goods between Russia, the Allied and the neutral countries, although the resolution contained the reservation that the policy of the Allied governments in respect of Soviet Russia was unchanged. This was the formal raising of the blockade.

The failure of the intervention was becoming increasingly obvious. Plans for overthrowing Soviet power by armed force continued to exist, but even among the bourgeoisie more and more people were beginning to realise how unrealistic they were. The war was having a devastating effect on the economy of the West-European countries.

[40] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 638.

Sensible bourgeois politicians realised that without the participation of Russia and the use of its resources a rapid restoration of the European economy would be impossible.

The Soviet government sought to develop trade relations and economic cooperation with the capitalist countries as widely as possible. In a talk with the correspondent of the American newspaper *The World* on February 21, 1920, Lenin, touching upon this question, said: "I know of no reason why a Socialistic commonwealth like ours cannot do business indefinitely with capitalistic countries. We don't mind taking their capitalistic locomotives and farming machinery, so why should they mind taking our Socialistic wheat, flax and platinum."[41] Here Lenin was proceeding from the principle of peaceful coexistence, stressing the need for a policy of mutually advantageous business cooperation.

On March 31, 1920, the Soviet government signed a trading agreement with Estonia, then the only European country with which peace had been formally concluded.

Throughout 1920 Soviet Russia had achieved a certain amount of success in developing trade relations via Estonia. Thus, according to the statistics of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade in 1920 about 4,000 truckloads of goods with a total weight of 45,000 tons, of which more than half was agricultural machinery and implements, were supplied to Soviet Russia via Estonia.

The Soviet-Estonian treaty and the raising of the blockade were of fundamental importance. They confirmed Lenin's proposition on the possibility of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, remarked in a letter to the Soviet representative in Estonia: "Our relations with Estonia must be the touchstone of the possibilities for our peaceful coexistence with bourgeois states ... we must remove everything that could hinder this policy."[42]

The Soviet Government's Foreign Policy in the Period of the Polish Intervention

In spite of the major successes achieved by the Soviet government at the beginning of 1920, the new breathing-space which began after Denikin's defeat proved to be short-lived. Imperialist circles had not yet abandoned their plans to subjugate the workers and peasants of Russia by armed force. The supporters of intervention continued to prepare new military campaigns. The frontline of the anti-Soviet

[41] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, Moscow, 1969, p. 177.

[42] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, to the Commissariat's representative in Estonia, March 22, 1920.

bloc was now occupied by Poland, whose policy was determined by a bourgeois-landowner government led by Józef Pilsudski, a reactionary, chauvinist and sworn enemy of communism and Soviet Russia.

The reports of the British Ambassador in Warsaw, Sir Horace Rumbold, to the British Foreign Office give some idea of Pilsudski's anti-Soviet attitude. Thus, for example, on November 7, 1919, in a talk with the Ambassador Pilsudski stated that his policy had always been to hit the Bolsheviks whenever and wherever he could.[43] In a letter to the Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon of January 23, 1920, Rumbold stated that Pilsudski had laid before the whiteguards Savinkov and Chaikovsky two plans, a large and a smaller one. The larger plan proposed the setting up of an alliance led by Poland between all the Russian border states, including Finland and "anti-Bolshevik Russia", for the struggle against Bolshevism. The smaller plan concerned the regulation of future relations between Poland and "anti-Bolshevik Russia". Pilsudski announced that his aim was to create a kind of League of Nations in Eastern Europe to combat the Bolsheviks.[44] Although the Polish people wanted peace, its voice was drowned by the reaction which ruled in Poland and which listened only to what was being said in London, in Downing Street. This was borne out by the above-mentioned statement of Pilsudski's. In it Pilsudski outlined the British imperialist plan to take the Ukraine away from Soviet Russia and give it to Petlyura and then to conclude a Polish-Ukrainian alliance against the Soviet state. Subsequently it was proposed to make this alliance the foundation for a broad anti-Soviet bloc with the participation of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland. This is precisely how the Ministerial Director in the German Foreign Ministry von Maltzan described the British plan in his memorandum for the Reichschancellor of May 4, 1920, drawn up as a result of talks with General Mannerheim who had arrived in Berlin from Finland. In this memorandum von Maltzan wrote that the Entente powers had decided to weld the border states into an anti-Soviet bloc and that "this was why Britain supported in Warsaw the idea of setting up a Polish-Ukrainian alliance directed against Soviet Russia, and, finally, got it put into practice". As the memorandum stated the future plan was to bring Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland into this alliance more or less firmly.

A proposal to take part in the struggle against Soviet Russia was also made to Germany. However, in his reply von Maltzan said that "it is not the intention of the German government to take part in military operations against Soviet Russia as long as it does not threaten German frontiers. Moreover, the failure of the Galz-Bermondt under-

[43] *Documents of British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, First Series, Vol. III, p. 634.

[44] Ibid., pp. 800-01.

taking had cost Germany too dear for it to embark again on such adventures".[45]

This decision was taken in spite of the proposal of General Ludendorff, who at the beginning of January 1920 presented the government with a memorandum in which he suggested that Germany should take an active part in the Entente's general military campaign against Soviet Russia. This proposal was strongly opposed by General von Seeckt, on whose orders a memorandum by Major Bittinger dated January 17, 1920, was sent to the Foreign Minister. It said that the German people did not desire to fight against Soviet Russia. "Thus," the memorandum stressed, "General Ludendorff's plan is politically utopian and impracticable militarily, and even if it were practicable, it would be fatal for Germany."[46]

The October Revolution and the principle of the self-determination of nations proclaimed by it created the conditions for ensuring Poland's independence. On several occasions the Soviet government addressed the Polish people explaining the principles of its foreign policy and expressing the sincere desire to live with it in peace. It pointed out that there was no question which could not be decided peacefully, by means of negotiations, mutual concessions and agreements. The All-Russia Central Executive Committee in its address to the Polish people of February 2, 1920, solemnly proclaimed: "The freedom of Poland is an indispensable condition for Russia's free development."[47] The Committee expressed the conviction that by joint efforts peaceful and most friendly relations would be established between the peoples of Poland and Soviet Russia. In his reply to questions from Karl Wigand, correspondent of Universal Service, published in *The New York Evening Journal* Lenin said: "Do we intend to attack Poland and Rumania? No. We have declared most emphatically and officially, in the name of the Council of People's Commissars and the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, our peaceful intentions."[48]

Seeking to normalise relations, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on February 24, 1920, on behalf of the Soviet government made new peace proposals to Romania, the USA and Japan, and on February 25 to Czechoslovakia.

One of the tasks of Soviet policy during this period was to avoid an armed conflict with imperialist Japan in the Far East and to prepare for resistance in the event of a new campaign by the imperialist Western powers to take Russia's vital centres. On February 19, 1920,

[45] *Bundesarchiv in Coblenz* (FRG), F.RK 431, Bd. 133, memorandum of 4.5. 1920 from von Maltzan to the Reichschancellor.

[46] *Political Archives of the Foreign Ministry of the FRG*, f. RM 9, Bd. 1, Bittinger's memorandum of January 17, 1920, to the Foreign Minister Simons.

[47] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 356.

[48] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 365.

Lenin said: "We would be idiots if we allowed ourselves to be diverted by a silly movement in the depths of Siberia, for that would bring Denikin to life and the Poles would hit us. That would be a crime."[49] The creation on April 6, 1920, of a buffer state in the Far East, the Far Eastern Republic, was an important event. As Lenin stated, "we cannot go to war with Japan and must make every effort, not only to put off a war with Japan, but, if possible, to avert it because, for reasons known to you, it is beyond our strength".[50]

At the same time Soviet diplomacy was seeking to bring to a successful conclusion the negotiations begun with Lithuania, Latvia and Finland and to frustrate attempts by the White Poles and the Entente to set up a united front of these states with Poland and the remainder of the whiteguards in the Crimea for a joint war against Soviet Russia.

While preparing resistance in the event of an attack from Pilsudski's Poland, the Soviet Republic also did its utmost to conclude peace with it, ardently desiring to avert war, while the imperialists were inciting the Polish government to military adventurism. On several occasions (from January to March 1920) the Soviet government proposed the opening of peace negotiations, but the reactionary Polish government, obsessed with the desire to annex Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Russian and Lithuanian territories, would not listen to the voice of reason. True, on March 27, 1920, the Polish government did agree to negotiations. However, this was done solely with the aim of deceiving the Polish people, who did not want war against Soviet Russia. In fact the Polish leaders were not thinking of peace.

A Note from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of April 8, 1920, addressed to the Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, France, Italy and the USA, revealed the dishonest game of negotiations by the reactionary Polish leaders. "We cannot overlook the fact," the Note said, "that the Polish government is only servilely imitating the methods of the German Kaiser government of the time of Brest-Litovsk, even though present Russia is not the Russia of those times."[51]

Seeking to preserve peace, the Communist Party and the Soviet government also took account of the real state of affairs—the possibility of an attack by Poland. The Ninth Party Congress (March-April 1920) in its decisions warned the people that "as long as the imperialist bourgeoisie is in power in the major countries, the Socialist Republic cannot regard itself as being safe. The future course of events can at any moment drive the imperialists, who have lost the ground beneath their feet, onto the path of bloody adventures against Soviet

[49] *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*, p. 97.
[50] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Moscow, 1966, p. 465.
[51] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, pp. 446-47.

Russia".[52] Events soon proved these words to be right.

On April 25 White Polish troops, armed and equipped by the imperialists of France, the USA and Britain, launched an offensive against Soviet Russia. Pilsudski was hoping for an easy victory.

He soon received the support of the whiteguard army of Baron Wrangel, who had gathered together the remnants of Denikin's troops and other counter-revolutionary forces and entrenched himself in the Crimea. The new Entente campaign began from two directions at once: from the west by the White Poles and from the south by Wrangel's troops.

However, if already in 1919 it had been harder for the imperialists to wage war against Soviet Russia than in 1918, fighting it was far more difficult in 1920, when the Red Army had become a great force.

In addition, the intervention against the workers' and peasants' state aroused strong protests and indignation among the broad mass of the people in the capitalist countries.

In reply to the Soviet government's appeals to the working people of all countries not to weaken their attacks on the bourgeois governments "aimed at preventing them from strangling the people's revolution in Russia"[53] the campaign for the defence of Russia was developing increasingly widely in the capitalist countries. The working people were demanding more and more resolutely an end to intervention in Russia. In Britain, Germany, France, the USA and other countries progressive democratic forces set up "Action Committees" which led a mass movement of solidarity with the Russian workers and peasants under the slogan "Hands off Russia!" This movement was at its height precisely in 1920 during the Polish-Soviet war and Wrangel's campaign. This movement of protest against intervention even spread to the interventionist troops fighting in Russia. "The international bourgeoisie has only to raise a hand against us to have it seized by its own workers," Lenin remarked.[54]

The movement of solidarity with Soviet Russia was an important factor which exercised a restraining influence on the policy and anti-Soviet plans of the imperialist governments.

Nevertheless, the Entente powers gave the most active support to the White Poles in their offensive against Soviet Russia. France did so openly. As for Britain, and to a certain extent the USA, they sought to disguise their participation in the fight against Soviet Russia. On the one hand, the British and American governments persisted in arming Pilsudski's troops and, consequently, were among the main organisers of the anti-Soviet campaign. On the other, Britain opened

[52] *The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and CC Plenary Meetings*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1970, p. 176 (in Russian).

[53] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 135.

[54] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 309.

up trade negotiations with the Soviet government during the Soviet-Polish war. The British government made a statement alleging that it did not support Poland's offensive and wanted peace with Russia. All this was to prevent the broad masses from understanding the real objectives of British imperialism.

The Soviet government had to take into account all the factors influencing the policy of the Entente. Individual actions by the British government were conditioned not only by the inter-party struggle but also by the movement of the working masses and were designed to weaken the latter's pressure and to strengthen the government's position at home. Account also had to be taken of the struggle of trends within the bourgeoisie—the moderate trend, which expressed the interests of circles for whom development of trade with Russia was advantageous, and the extreme right, which was connected with colonial and military imperialist circles who regarded it as their main task to destroy Bolshevism and Soviet government and eliminate the latter's powerful, revolutionising influence in Europe and, in particular, in the British colonies and spheres of influence in Asia.

The White Poles' offensive failed. It was repulsed by the Red Army. At the height of the Soviet troops' attack, on July 11, 1920, the British government in the person of the Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon sent the Soviet government a Note proposing an immediate suspension of hostilities and the conclusion of an armistice between Poland and Soviet Russia, and also "between the forces of Soviet Russia and General Wrangel". The so-called Curzon Line, which had been drawn up by the Entente powers already in late 1919, was proposed as the frontier between Poland and the RSFSR. It ran along the line: Grodno-Valovka-Nemirov-Brest-Litovsk-Dorogusk-Ustilug, east of Grubeshov via Krylov, and thence west of Rava-Russkaya, east of Peremysl to the Carpathians. Curzon offered British mediation in the concluding of an armistice between Soviet Russia and Poland. The Note said that it was proposed to call a conference in London under the auspices of the great powers to be attended by "representatives of Soviet Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Finland, with the object of negotiating a final peace between Russia and its neighbouring states".

The British bourgeoisie realised that the further advance of the Red Army threatened the power of reaction in Poland and could lead to the strengthening of the revolutionary movement in the rest of Europe. The British proposal was designed to halt the Red Army's advance, enable the troops of the Polish landowners and capitalists to summon up their strength, receive assistance from France, Britain and the USA, and prepare to resume the offensive. The proposal for an "armistice with Wrangel" reflected the imperialists' desire to turn the Crimean Peninsula into a refuge for the whiteguards and preserve a hotbed of counter-revolution in the south of Russia.

The Soviet government replied to Curzon's Note on July 17, 1920.

It pointed out that it had not received any peace proposals from the Polish government. The Soviet government recalled Britain's role in organising the intervention and rejected British mediation. The Soviet government stressed that it wished to establish peace with Poland, but that it considered direct negotiations with Poland without outside intervention to be essential for this. With regard to the proposal to call a conference in London, the Soviet reply described this as a result of the British government's "lack of sufficient information" about the mutual relations between Russia and its neighbours. A peace treaty with Lithuania was signed on July 12, 1920. The Soviet government conducted peace negotiations with Latvia and Finland directly, without any outside intervention. "Their further conduct on the same principles," the Soviet government stated, "is the best guarantee of the successful achievement of their aim."[55]

Thus the attempt to halt the victorious advance of the Red Army and prevent it from crushing the White Polish aggressors failed. At the same time the British government's endeavours to place the Soviet state's relations with its neighbours under the control of the imperialist powers also failed.

On July 22 the Polish government invited the government of the RSFSR to conclude an armistice immediately and begin direct peace negotiations. The Soviet government agreed at once. But when on August 1 the Polish delegation presented the Soviet delegates in Baranovichi with their credentials, it transpired that these credentials were from the Polish command and not from the government, and that they were only for the conducting of armistice negotiations, not peace negotiations. The Soviet delegation announced that it must receive a written mandate (or one confirmed on the wireless) from the Polish government in order to make it possible for the two delegations to meet on August 4. But time passed, and the mandate did not come. Polish ruling circles were obviously in no hurry to conclude peace and merely wanted to prevent the development of the Red Army's operations and gain time. As it soon became clear, they were placing their hopes not on peace negotiations but on the hastily prepared intervention of the Entente.

The Red Army's advance on Warsaw caused alarm among the imperialists. On August 4, 1920, Lloyd George summoned the members of the Soviet Trade Delegation in London to a meeting to negotiate with the British government and announced that, inasmuch as an armistice between Russia and Poland had not yet been signed and Russian troops were advancing, Britain would have to fulfil its obligations in respect of Poland. The British navy had therefore been ordered to renew the blockade of Russia.[56] The British government's

[55] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1959, pp. 51, 53, 54.
[56] Ibid., p. 81.

plan was to intimidate the Soviet state. France and the USA acted in complete accord with British imperialism. They all supplied weapons generously to Poland and Wrangel.

In addition, the USA took diplomatic action which had far-reaching aims. On August 10, 1920, the US Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby published a Note addressed to the Italian Ambassador Romano Avezzana; formally it was a reply to an enquiry from the Italian government on the policy of the USA with respect to Soviet Russia. The Note said that the USA did not and would not recognise Soviet power and that it was pursuing a hostile policy with respect to it and would continue to do so. The Note was full of slander of the Soviet government. This act by the USA was a summons to other countries to follow suit.

The French government for its part announced that it was determined to support all "the principles so clearly formulated by the United States" in Colby's Note.[57] The Polish government expressed "sincere thanks to the United States for the sympathetic attitude" in the war against the Soviet state.[58]

It goes without saying that the Soviet government could not ignore this hostile diplomatic sabotage by the USA. The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs sent a telegram to Soviet representatives abroad in which it instructed them to explain "to public opinion and, particularly, to the working masses" the mendacity of the statements by the US Secretary of State. While noting Colby's mendacity and slander and consistently upholding the principles of peaceful coexistence, the Soviet government announced that it regarded it as essential to establish and observe unswervingly peaceful and friendly relations with the existing governments, including the government of the USA. It was in the interests both of Russia and of North America "to establish between them now fully correct and loyal peaceful friendly relations essential for the development of trade between them and for the satisfaction of the economic requirements of both parties in spite of the differences in their social and political systems".[59]

[57] *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1920,* Vol. III, Washington, 1936, p. 470.

Ruling circles in the USA refused to maintain any contact with the representative of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in New York, Martens. They boycotted Martens and prevented him from dealing with business circles in the USA. As early as June 12, 1919, a police raid was carried out on the premises of the Soviet Mission. The intention was to fabricate "proof" that the Soviet representative had broken US laws and to launch a hostile campaign against Soviet Russia. But the police provocation was unsuccessful. In its Note to the State Department of June 20, 1919, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR protested at the arbitrary act committed with respect to its representative in New York.

[58] Ibid., pp. 397-98.

[59] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents,* Vol. III, p. 177.

The Western powers did not confine themselves to diplomatic support of the White Poles. They also undertook other operations in order to save the reactionary Polish rulers: military advisers, arms and equipment were quickly sent to Poland. As a result of the measures taken by the governments of Britain, France and the USA, and also as a consequence of errors committed by the command of the Red Army, Soviet troops were compelled to retreat from Warsaw.

This emboldened Pilsudski's supporters and they began to drag out the peace negotiations by all manner of means. The Polish government stated that the Soviet terms were unacceptable and refused to discuss them. It was planning a new offensive to seize the territories of the Ukraine and Byelorussia.

The Soviet government, however, proposed that a peace settlement be based on a solemn declaration of the independence of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Lithuania. Addressing the Ninth All-Russia Conference of the RCP (B) on September 22, Lenin said that the Soviet Republic wished to avoid a difficult winter campaign and again proposed to Poland "a peace that is to her advantage and our disadvantage. However, the bourgeois diplomatists, following their old habit, may possibly interpret our frank statement as a sign of weakness".[60] Soviet Russia had shown that it was capable of defeating its enemies and could continue the war, but was striving for peace. The Red Army offensive, as Lenin pointed out then, had exerted a tremendous influence on the whole international situation. For the first time the Soviet Republic had acted as a most important factor the influence of which had been felt in international relations. "This was a most important turning point," said Lenin, "not only in the policy of Soviet Russia, but also in world policy. Until now we have been acting as a single force against the whole world of the imperialists, dreaming only of exploiting the differences between them to stop the enemy from crushing us. But now we have said: 'We have grown stronger now, and we shall reply to all your attempts to attack with a counter-attack, so that you know that you not only risk losing the several hundred million that you lost on Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin, but that you risk extending the territory of the Soviet Republics with each of your attacks.' "[61]

In order to save the peoples of the RSFSR and Poland from unnecessary sacrifices and to concentrate its forces on the struggle against Wrangel the Soviet state agreed to important concessions. These concessions were set out in a statement of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of September 23, 1920, which it addressed to the government of Poland.

[60] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 277-78.

[61] As quoted in: *A History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 3, Book 2, Moscow, 1968, p. 499 (in Russian).

In this statement the All-Russia Central Executive Committee strongly condemned the continuation of the Polish-Soviet war and supported an immediate agreement between the RSFSR and Poland. "This war, which is being supported by the Entente in its imperialist interests," said the statement, "threatens to develop into a most severe winter campaign of unprecedented cruelty, devastation and bloodshed. Its continuation could be desired only by the Entente imperialists, who are counting on the further sapping of the strength of both Poland and Russia." With the purpose of achieving immediate agreement with Poland, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee retracted some of the terms that had originally been formulated by the Russo-Ukrainian delegation.

The All-Russia Central Executive Committee confirmed Soviet Russia's consent to the immediate signing of an armistice and preliminary peace terms based on recognition of a line running considerably further east of the "Curzon Line" as the frontier between Poland and Russia.

The All-Russia Central Executive Committee stated that its proposal was valid for ten days. If the preliminary peace terms had not been signed by October 5, the Council of People's Commissars had the right to change the terms proposed.[62]

In spite of opposition from the Entente, and France in particular, Poland agreed to sign a peace. On October 12, 1920, a treaty on an armistice and preliminary peace terms between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR, on the one hand, and Poland, on the other, was signed in Riga.[63]

Both contracting parties recognised the independence of the Ukraine and Byelorussia. However, the bourgeois-landowner government of Poland succeeded in annexing the western territories from the Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Byelorussia. Both parties undertook to cease hostilities on October 18, 1920.

The peace with Poland was extremely unstable, as long as Wrangel, whose army had launched an attack in the Ukraine at the beginning of October, remained undefeated. The Red Army repulsed Wrangel's attack, and then on October 28 mounted a powerful offensive and took Perekop by storm. Shortly afterwards Wrangel was finally defeated and the whiteguards and interventionists were driven out of the Crimea.

But even after Wrangel's defeat the Polish government continued to impede the course of the peace treaty negotiations. Therefore, the Soviet-Polish negotiations dragged on. It was not until March 18, 1921, that the final peace treaty between Soviet Russia and the Ukraine, on the one hand, and Poland, on the other, was signed (also in Riga). It

62 *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents,* Vol. III, p. 206.
63 Ibid., pp. 245-58.

was based on the terms of the preliminary treaty. Under the Peace Treaty of Riga the western Ukrainian and Byelorussian territories went to Poland. But the conclusion of this treaty was of great international importance: the end of the war meant the total defeat of the imperialist powers' interventionist designs with respect to Soviet Russia. Only in the Soviet Far East the Japanese occupation continued for a while (up to October 1922, and on Sakhalin even up to 1925).

The end of the foreign intervention and the Civil War marked the beginning of a new, peaceful period in the historical development of the Soviet country—a period of economic rehabilitation and the creation of the technical and economic prerequisites for the building of socialism. A period began in which economic construction, the development of the country's productive forces, acquired decisive significance.

Already at the Ninth Congress of the RCP (B) (March 29-April 5, 1920) one of the central questions concerned a single economic plan providing for the restoration of transport and the fuel, metallurgical and other industries. The main place in this plan was devoted to the question of the electrification of the whole national economy, which Lenin put forward as "a great programme taking ten to twenty years"[64] (the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia Plan). This programme could be implemented only if there were peace. The Party continued to concern itself, as before, with peace. It gave Soviet diplomacy as its main task the establishment of normal relations with capitalist countries.

With the aim of carrying out this task the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR appointed M. M. Litvinov, a member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, as the official representative of Soviet Russia and gave him a letter of authority, signed by Lenin on March 25, 1920, to conduct preliminary negotiations with representatives of the governments of Britain, the USA, Belgium, Italy, France and Japan on possible peace terms between Russia and these states. This document said that Litvinov was "authorised to negotiate and sign an agreement on the time, place and preliminary terms for peace negotiations with the governments of Britain, America, Belgium, Italy, France and Japan".[65]

Attaching paramount importance to the normalisation of relations with the USA, the Soviet government instructed L. B. Krasin, then People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, to enter into negotiations with the US government. The credentials signed by Lenin on July 18, 1920, said that the Council of People's Commissars had instructed Krasin "to enter into negotiations with the government of the United States

[64] *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, p. 149.
[65] *Lenin Miscellany XXXIV*, p. 284.

of America on the conclusion with the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic of a political agreement and a treaty on the complete restoration of peaceful relations between the two countries and also any economic agreements and to sign these agreements on behalf of the government of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic".[66]

Lenin saw trade and economic relations between the socialist state and the capitalist world as the economic basis of peaceful coexistence of states with different social and economic systems. Developing this important thesis, Lenin noted that the trade and economic relations between Soviet Russia and the capitalist countries should be based on full equality of rights and mutual advantage and that Russia should not allow anyone to dictate conditions to it.

Moreover, he stressed that such business relations were advantageous not only for the Soviet state, but also for the USA and that the policy of refusing to develop trade with Soviet Russia was harming the USA itself and was a short-sighted one. "Whether it [the USA—*Ed.*] likes it or not," Lenin said in October 1920, "Soviet Russia is a great power. After three years of blockade, counter-revolution, armed intervention and the Polish war Soviet Russia is stronger than ever before. America stands to gain nothing from Wilson's policy of piously refusing to have anything to do with us on the grounds that our government is not to their taste."[67]

Lenin considered it extremely important for all the Soviet republics to pursue a common foreign trade policy. At his suggestion the following point was added to draft directives from the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) to the representative of the Council of Labour and Defence and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade in the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics: "To avoid competition in the foreign market between the RSFSR and the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics an agreement is being concluded under which their foreign representatives in each individual country shall operate only by mutual consent."[68] The draft directives with Lenin's amendments were approved by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP (B) on May 4, 1921.[69] The centralised management of foreign trade and the united action of the Soviet Republics in the foreign market were thus ensured in practice even before the formation of the USSR. This was fully in keeping with the interests of all Soviet Republics, for any form of uncoordinated action in the foreign market would have been detrimental to the national economy as a whole.

[66] Ibid., p. 336.
[67] *Lenin Miscellany XXXVII*, p. 254.
[68] Ibid., p. 294.
[69] Ibid.

Anglo-Soviet Negotiations on a Trade Agreement

Already during the armed struggle against the interventionists, insistent attempts were made by the Soviet government and Soviet organisations to establish contacts with the outside world and set up trade relations.[70] But it was impossible to achieve any significant success at that time. Economic relations amounted to occasional business contacts with some firms. The imperialist powers, pursuing a policy of anti-Soviet intervention and economic blockade, did their utmost to hinder and undermine trade relations with the Land of Soviets. The position changed after Soviet Russia defeated its enemies and obtained peace.

Of the leading capitalist states Britain showed most interest in trading with Russia. Exporting to Russia and importing from Russia were of special importance for it. This explains why the British government agreed to begin Soviet-British trade negotiations. For this purpose a trade delegation arrived in Britain, led by Krasin, who at his very first meeting with the British representatives on May 31, 1920, proposed a concrete programme of development of Soviet-British trade.

But the British government was obviously in no hurry to negotiate. Not until June 30 did it announce in a memorandum its willingness to conclude an agreement on the mutual cessation of hostile actions and the resumption of trade relations on the following terms: that each party should undertake to refrain from hostile actions or measures directed against the other party and from the carrying on of any official propaganda; the British government agreed not to demand the immediate settlement of the question of debts; it was prepared to postpone the fixing of Russian obligations of this nature, as well as the settlement of other questions connected with debts or the claims of Great Britain on Russia or of Russia on Great Britain until the peace negotiations were commenced.[71] In a Note of July 7, 1920, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs announced its consent to these terms. But the British government sought to use the negotiations as a means of exerting pressure on the Soviet government to make it halt the advance of the Red Army and conclude an armistice with Poland.

The Anglo-Soviet negotiations continued with intervals until the end of 1920.

As can be seen from documents in British archives Lloyd George's government did not decide finally to conclude a treaty with Soviet Russia until the Cabinet meeting on November 17-18, 1920, i. e., after

[70] See chapters I and III of the present volume.

[71] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, pp. 17-18.

Wrangel's army had been defeated and the intervention by landowner Poland had failed totally. The meeting of the British Cabinet on November 17, 1920 at Downing Street was attended by ministers known for their hostility towards Soviet Russia. They included the organiser of the armed intervention, Winston Churchill, the Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon, the President of the Board of Trade R. Horne, Austen Chamberlain, Arthur J. Balfour, and Bonar Law. The Prime Minister Lloyd George was in the chair.

In his speech Horne spoke of the threatening rise in unemployment and the growing competition of other countries in trade with Soviet Russia. Supporting the development of trade with the latter, Horne stressed the idea that with the help of trade it would be possible to defeat Bolshevism. "The only way," he said, "we shall fight Bolshevism is by trade."[72]

Lord Curzon sought to frighten the ministers with the "Red peril" which was threatening British colonies in the East, and above all in India, and urged the government to be cautious at signing a trade agreement.[73] He was supported by the War Minister Churchill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer Chamberlain, and others.

However, among the ministers there were also some who showed common sense. Thus, for example, Bonar Law said that "you cannot go on talking and not conclude an agreement", particularly as the country was in for some bad unemployment.[74]

The Prime Minister, Lloyd George, agreed entirely with Horne and Bonar Law. He said that it was the policy they had approved a year before, which had also been accepted by France and Italy, and that because of their hatred of Soviet Russia they would prefer to act to their own detriment rather than to promote Russia's interests. He then remarked that it was essential that the government should consider the interests of Britain, because it was going through hard times. "There are no orders coming in. Customers won't buy. We may have the worst period of unemployment any of us have known. The Russians are prepared to pay in gold and you won't buy. We trade with cannibals in the Solomon Islands."[75] In reply to the opponents of the agreement who said that Soviet power would soon perish, Lloyd George continued: "I have heard predictions about the fall of the Soviet Government for the last two years. Denikin, Yudenich, Wrangel, all have collapsed but I cannot see any immediate prospect of the collapse of the Soviet Government."[76]

The next day, November 18, 1920, the Cabinet agreed by a con-

[72] *Public Record Office*, Cab. 23/23, p. 96.
[73] Ibid., p. 97.
[74] Ibid., p. 97/4.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., p. 98.

siderable majority "that the President of the Board of Trade should be authorized to conclude a Trading Agreement with Russia".[77]

Even after this Soviet Russia was forced to exert a great deal of effort until finally, on March 16, 1921, a Soviet-British agreement on the renewal of trade relations between the two countries was signed, which was in fact not only of a commercial, but also of a political nature. In concluding this agreement, Britain recognised the Soviet state de facto. Both parties undertook to refrain from any hostile action and the conduct "outside their own borders" of propaganda against the other party. The parties undertook not to blockade each other and to eliminate "all obstacles that until now have stood in the way of renewing" trade, and not to put it at a disadvantage compared to trade with other states. The British government announced that it would take no action aimed at sequestering or taking possession of the gold, property and goods that belonged to the Soviet government and were imported into Britain. No trade would have been possible without this undertaking. In the joint declaration it was agreed that the question of mutual claims should be dealt with in a peace treaty which was provided for in the preamble to the agreement.[78]

For Soviet Russia the agreement with Britain was of considerable significance, because it was the first treaty to be concluded with a great capitalist power and facilitated the development of foreign trade. It was an example of the implementation of the principle of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between Soviet Russia and a capitalist country. The Soviet government attached great importance to the conclusion of the treaty with Britain. "The important thing for us," Lenin said, "is to force windows open one after another. The agreement with Britain was that of a Socialist Republic with a bourgeois state.... The consequences have shown that thanks to this agreement we have forced open a window of sorts."[79] The agreement was advantageous for Britain too, in so far as its industry received new markets, which, in view of the difficulties Britain was encountering and then of the severe economic crisis of 1921, was of considerable importance.

A special role in the establishment of economic relations with foreign states and in the development of the Soviet economy was allotted to foreign concessions. On November 23, 1920, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR passed a decree on concessions. Remarking on the importance of concessions Lenin wrote: "The granting of concessions under reasonable terms is desirable also for us, as one of the means of attracting into Russia, during the period of the

[77] Ibid., p. 102.

[78] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, pp. 607-14.

[79] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 289.

coexistence side by side of socialist and capitalist states, the technical help of the countries which are more advanced in this respect."[80] Concessions did not have any important economic effect. But the very idea of granting them showed that the Land of Soviets was really striving for peace and business cooperation with the capitalist countries.

In the autumn of 1920 the American millionaire Washington Vanderlip arrived in Moscow to conduct negotiations on a concession on Kamchatka. These negotiations had important political repercussions. The attraction of American capital for the purpose of the economic development of a remote area, to which the Japanese interventionists had laid claim, meant setting American imperialism against Japanese imperialism. Capitalist circles in Japan opposed the American concession. As a result, as Lenin remarked, we "have ... an undoubted slackening of both Japanese and American pressure on us".[81]

In the exceptionally difficult conditions of the struggle against the armed intervention and the Civil War special credit must go to Lenin for putting an end to the political isolation in which Soviet Russia found itself at that time. As Chicherin writes in his memoirs, Lenin "throughout the whole period of the intervention insisted that we should address peace proposals to our enemies. He was not at all afraid of producing an impression of weakness by this".[82] At this time Lenin took an active part in the preparation of all the most important diplomatic acts of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, received foreign correspondents, representatives of business circles, diplomats, writers, etc.

Lenin, who possessed political realism and unequalled diplomatic skill, helped Soviet diplomacy unmask the perfidious anti-Soviet designs of imperialist diplomacy. As Chicherin recalls, Lenin in "his daily telephone conversations gave me the most accurate advice, showing a remarkable flexibility and the ability to avoid the enemy's blows. Again thanks to his personal intervention we were able to smooth out the differences that appeared".[83] Chicherin constantly stressed the superiority of Leninist diplomacy over bourgeois diplomacy and its stratagems. In particular, he wrote: "When the diplomacy of foreign states with its characteristic skill developed over the centuries sought to mask the true state of affairs and its true intentions under a mass of fine phrases, feeling or pleasant statements, Vladimir Ilyich would turn all this into a pile of rubbish with a few words, placing the real, bare facts of true reality before the eyes of his

[80] Ibid., Vol. 30, p. 39.
[81] Ibid., Vol. 31, p. 470.
[82] *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Vol. 2, p. 170.
[83] G. V. Chicherin, op cit., p. 279.

interlocutor. It was this that made him such an inimitable master of conducting policy and such a terrible enemy of the finest exponents of foreign diplomacy."[84]

* * *

The end of 1920 marks the conclusion of the crucial period in the history of Soviet Russia: the armed struggle ended, the onslaught of the interventionists and the forces of internal counter-revolution had been repulsed. By now the whole world had realised that Soviet Russia could stand up for itself and must be reckoned with. In the struggle against the interventionists the Soviet country had won peace for a considerable period. In order to achieve peace, it had been necessary to defeat the enemy on the fields of battle.

Born of the October Revolution, the socialist state successfully withstood all its bitter trials; by its victory over its numerous enemies the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat proved the invincible strength of the new social system.

Imperialism refused to admit the existence alongside of it of a new, socialist system and sought to destroy the latter by force. The Soviet people crushed the internal counter-revolution and the foreign intervention and won peace, wresting it from the imperialists. In 1921 there began a period of peaceful development for the Soviet Republic, of peaceful, creative work in developing the country's productive forces and building a socialist society. A start was made in establishing official diplomatic relations between the Soviet state and the capitalist countries. This period of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist system continued for about twenty years, until the attack by nazi Germany in 1941.

[84] *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1970, p. 406 (in Russian).

CHAPTER V

THE USSR ESTABLISHES NEW RELATIONS WITH THE EASTERN COUNTRIES

From its inception, the Soviet government, led by Vladimir Lenin, repeatedly proclaimed that Soviet Russia was ready to establish new, genuinely equal relations with the dependent countries, especially with its neighbours in the East. It proclaimed "a complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilisation, which has built the prosperity of the exploiters belonging to a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of working people in Asia, in the colonies in general, and in the small countries".[1]

Not only did the Soviet government annul all the inequitable treaties and agreements which tsarist Russia had with those countries but it also helped the Eastern peoples in their struggle for political and economic independence. This Leninist policy was succinctly put in the Note of the Soviet government sent to the government of Iran. "The whole Eastern policy of Russia," it read in part, "will continue to be diametrically opposite to the Eastern policy of the imperialist powers and will be directed towards independent economic and political development of the Eastern peoples and will help them in that in every possible way. The people and the Soviet government of Russia deem it to be their role and their mission to be the natural and selfless friends and allies of the peoples fighting for complete economic independence and political freedom."[2]

Soviet-Iranian Relations and the Treaty of 1921

In 1918 the British troops occupied Iran. The invaders made wide use of force, threats and bribery[3] to topple the unwanted governments or replace ministers in them to create docile cabinets.

The pro-British government of Iran broke off the negotiations which had begun in Petrograd between the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and the Iranian Ambassador. The Soviet government,

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 424.

[2] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, Moscow, 1961, pp. 80-81 (in Russian).

[3] See: J. M. Balfour, *Recent Happenings in Persia*, London, 1922, p. 157.

nevertheless, continued its attempts to enter into direct relations with Iran. A diplomatic mission headed by I. O. Kolomiitsev was sent to Teheran in July 1918. The Iranian government did not recognise it despite the fact that it had granted recognition to the Soviet government as early as December 1917. It continued to deal with the former tsarist envoy although the Soviet government had long removed him from his post. Baiting of the Soviet representatives began in the press. On the night of November 2 the Soviet mission was attacked by the whiteguards and there were some British officers among the attackers. The Iranian government failed to take measures to protect the Soviet representatives. The building of the mission was ransacked and looted, and the staff were arrested and handed over to British authorities who sent them to India. Only Kolomiitsev managed to escape. Violence was also perpetrated on the Soviet representatives in Meshed, the Consul Y. A. Babushkin, the Trade Representative I. A. Kalashnikov, and the Secretary of the Consulate, Afanasiev.[4]

The British imperialists not only suppressed the national liberation movement in that country but also made it a bridgehead for action against Soviet Russia. In the summer of 1918 the British General Dunsterville started an offensive on Baku and General Malleson on Turkmenia. The British planned to use Iran's territory as a base for conquering the Caucasus, notably Baku with its oilfields. They also used Iran to supply Kolchak's army across the Caspian via Guriev and help to establish communications between Kolchak and Denikin.

The early victories of the Red Army over Kolchak complicated the interventionists' position in Central Asia. In December 1918 units of the Red Army broke through the ring of counter-revolutionary forces encircling Turkestan to join with the troops of the Soviet Republic of Turkestan on January 22, 1919. The British interventionists were on the retreat.

The Red Army's liberation march aroused the oppressed peoples of the East. The victories scored by Soviet Russia convinced them that the imperialist armies could be defeated. The further the Red Army pushed towards the southern borders of the Soviet land the greater was the upsurge in Iran of the movement against imperialist oppression.

On June 26, 1919, the Soviet government sent an appeal to the government and people of Iran. Referring to its Note of 14 (27) January, 1918, which set out the principles of the Soviet policy with regard to Iran, the Soviet government said it was ready to annul all Iran's debts to the tsarist government, to lift control over Iran's

[4] R. A. Tuzmukhamedov, *Soviet-Iranian Relations (1917-1921)*, Moscow, 1960, p. 35 (in Russian). It was not until the summer of 1919 that Kolomiitsev was able to return to Moscow. The other members of the mission were either executed by firing squad or perished in British prisons in India.

national income customs, wire agencies, postal services, etc.—which the tsarist and the British governments were exercising under a common agreement. The Soviet government declared the Caspian Sea to be free for Iranian navigation and annulled all the Russian lease rights, both government and private. It handed over to the Iranian people the Russian Discount and Loan Bank in Iran with all its assets. It also freely handed over to the Iranian people all the railways and highways built by tsarist Russia in Iran, the port facilities in Enzeli, and all the Russian-owned postal and wire lines. Only the workers and employees of the above-mentioned institutions were to receive remuneration from the Iranian government. All the privileges of the Russian citizens were cancelled. Soviet Russia renounced interference in organising Iranian armed forces, etc. All that marked a complete break with the policy of imperialism and colonialism in favour of a completely new policy of the socialist state based on the principles of internationalism and self-determination of nations and recognition of the equal rights of all peoples. The appeal stressed that "the present step of the Russian Soviet government opens a new era in the history of relations between Russia and Persia".[5]

The Soviet government's policy with regard to dependent and oppressed peoples was a challenge to the colonial powers and their policy of plunder. The British occupation authorities and the Iranian government, which acted on its behest, concealed the appeal of the Soviet government from the Iranian people.

In the summer of 1919 the Soviet government sent another diplomatic mission to Iran, led by I. O. Kolomiitsev. The mission, however, was immediately arrested upon arrival in Iran at the instigation of the British. Kolomiitsev was assassinated by whiteguards with participation of an Iranian serviceman and on the instigation of the British authorities. The British colonialists were in a hurry to make short shrift of the Soviet mission because they were finalising secret negotiations with the Iranian government to sign a new treaty that would impose crippling terms on Iran.

The Anglo-Iranian Agreement was signed on August 9, 1919. Under the Agreement Great Britain had the right to appoint its advisers to the Iranian government and British officers to the Iranian army. A British loan against revenues from Iranian customs, the consent of the Iranian government to review the customs tariffs in Britain's favour, as well as other crippling terms of the Anglo-Iranian Agreement—all that signified that Iran was virtually becoming a British protectorate.

On August 28, 1919, Soviet Russia launched a new appeal to the workers and peasants of Iran. The Soviet government declared that it did not recognise the Anglo-Iranian Agreement which was enslaving

[5] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 200.

the Iranian people. "Persia has been stricken off the list of independent countries," the appeal proclaimed passionately, "the Persian people has been excluded from the number of free peoples, its own despots and oppressors are getting money from Britain and are becoming its paid servants."[6] Vehemently condemning that disgraceful agreement, the Soviet government again proposed to sign an equitable treaty with Iran.

The triumph of British imperialism proved to be short-lived. The foreign interventionists in Russia were suffering setback after setback. They were driven out from Transcaucasia and from Central Asia. The Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan was proclaimed in liberated Baku on April 28, 1920. The Red Army reached the frontiers with Iran. In May 1920 the interventionists withdrew their ground troops, their navy in the Caspian, and the remnants of the whiteguards to the Iranian port of Enzeli, which they planned to make into a stronghold to organise a new aggression against Soviet Russia.

The Soviet government was not going to put up with that. On May 18, 1920, it sent a force which landed in the port of Enzeli and on the coast. The Soviet troops forced the British to capitulate, to return the property they had seized, and evacuate from Enzeli. The prestige of the British Empire's arms was falling catastrophically. "Out of Iran," the Iranian people told the British occupiers.

On May 20, 1920, the Iranian government, under popular pressure, sent a Note to the Soviet government saying that it was prepared to send delegations to Baku and Moscow for talks with Soviet authorities. The Soviet government promptly replied that it was ready to start negotiations. It declared that in the changed conditions it was reiterating its former proposals.[7]

The British invaders, however, made another attempt to prevent negotiations between Soviet Russia and Iran from getting off the ground. They brought pressure to bear on the Iranian government to prevent it from sending the promised delegations to Baku and Moscow. On June 4, 1920, in a move clearly inspired by the British, it declared a protest over the Soviet landing in Enzeli, although it was aware of the order of the Soviet high command of May 26, 1920, under which the Soviet troops were to evacuate Enzeli, an order which was soon fulfilled.[8] Nevertheless the Iranian government, again under the pressure of the British invaders, filed a complaint with the League of Nations Council in June 1920, although the Soviet troops had by that time left Iran. The complaint was obviously ungrounded, so much so that even the Council of the League of Nations, which had never entertained friendly feelings towards the

[6] Ibid., p. 240.
[7] Ibid., p. 537.
[8] Ibid., p. 559.

Soviet land, failed to find any legal faults in the actions of Soviet troops and confined itself to suggesting that Iran resolve the disputes through direct negotiations with the Russian Republic.[9]

The British representatives engineered the overthrow of one Iranian government after another, and twice presented Iran with ultimatums demanding to ratify the Anglo-Iranian Agreement.

But the popular movement against the British occupiers and for establishing relations with the Soviet country proved stronger than the British intrigues. The Iranian government eventually had to enter into negotiations with the RSFSR. Iran's Ambassador Extraordinary Moshaver al-Mamalek arrived in Moscow in November 1920 to negotiate the treaty.

Shortly afterwards, a government coup took place in Teheran. A major role in it was played by Reza Khan (later Reza Shah) who commanded a regiment in the Cossack brigade once organised by the Russian government at the Shah's request. The coup of February 21, 1921, brought to power in Iran the government of Seyd Zia-el-Din who was a British agent. Yet even he failed to prevent the signing of a Soviet-Iranian treaty whose text had already been agreed. The Soviet-Iranian treaty was signed in Moscow on February 26, and on the same day the Iranian government declared that it would not present the treaty with Britain to the Majlis. The Majlis subsequently approved of that decision of the government. The British imperialism's policy thus suffered a defeat.

The Soviet-Iranian Treaty put a seal on the independence and sovereignty of Iran. In accordance with its notes of January 14 (27), 1918, and June 26, 1919, the Soviet government declared its renunciation of imperialist policies and reaffirmed that all the tractates, treaties, conventions, and agreements of the tsarist government with Iran, which belittled the rights of the Iranian people, were being declared null and void. At the same time it roundly condemned the criminal policy of all imperialist states with regard to the peoples of the East and renounced participation in any measures violating Iran's sovereignty. The Treaty abrogated all the agreements signed by tsarist Russia with third powers to Iran's detriment and established normal diplomatic relations between Russia and Iran. The sides agreed to recognise and observe the frontier established by the Russo-Persian Agreement of 1881 and stipulated the right of both states to jointly use the border rivers.

The Treaty also contained provisions on all the economic proposals made by the Soviet government in its Note of June 26, 1919. The Treaty read in part that "in view of the declaration by which it had

[9] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II; *Current International Policy in Treaties, Notes and Declarations*, Part III, Issue II, Moscow, 1929, pp. 26-27 (in Russian).

repudiated the colonial and capitalist policy which occasioned so many misfortunes, and was the cause of so much bloodshed", the Soviet government was handing over into complete possession of the Iranian people the assets of the Discount and Loan Bank of Iran and all its real estate and property. Wishing to grant the Iranian people the right to freely dispose of their communications, and as compensation of damages caused by the tsarist troops, the Soviet government handed over to the Iranian people the Russian-built highways and railways, wharves, piers, warehouses, and vessels on Lake Urmiah, the telegraph and telephone lines, the port of Enzeli with its warehouses, power plant, and other facilities, and renounced all the concessions obtained by tsarist government and Russian subjects from the government of Iran. The cost of the property which passed into the hands of the Iranian people amounted to almost 600 million roubles in gold.

Article 13 of the treaty made it binding on Iran "not to cede to a third power or to its subjects, the concessions and property restored to Persia by virtue of the present treaty, and to maintain those rights for the Persian nation".

The treaty annulled consular jurisdiction in Iran while providing for the possible use by Soviet Russia of the fisheries off the southern coast of the Caspian and restoring trade, diplomatic, and consular relations.

The Soviet-Iranian treaty included articles safeguarding the independence of Iran and the security of the Soviet country. The contracting parties undertook to refrain from interfering in each other's affairs. Under Article 5 (Point 1) the two sides undertook "to prohibit the formation or presence within their respective territories of any organisations or groups of persons irrespective of the name by which they are known, whose object is to engage in acts of hostility against Persia or Russia, or against the allies of Russia. They will likewise prohibit the formation of armed troops within their respective territories with the afore-mentioned object".

Point 3 set down Iran's and Russia's commitment "to prevent by all the means at their disposal the presence on their territory of troops or armed forces of any third power in cases in which their presence created a threat to the frontiers, interests or security of the other High Contracting Party".

It will be seen from this text that it applied not only to Russian counter-revolutionaries but also to imperialist states should they act as Britain had in 1918-1920 and try to turn Iran into a bridgehead against the Soviet land. Because the Treaty was signed at the time when a British occupation army was in Iran the article referred above all to British imperialists.

Article 6 read: "If a Third Party should attempt to carry out a policy of usurpation by means of armed intervention in Persia, or if this Power should desire to use Persian territory as a base of opera-

tions against Russia, if it should threaten the frontiers of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic or those of its Allies, and if the Persian Government should not be able to put a stop to such menace after having been once called upon to do so by Russia, Russia shall have the right to advance its troops into the Persian interior for the purpose of carrying out the military operations necessary for its defence."

Article 6 was not by any means a one-sided guarantee of the security of Soviet borders. It envisaged also the territorial integrity and security of Iran inasmuch as it made it binding on Soviet Russia to prevent "a policy of aggrandisement" by third powers in the territory of Persia, i. e., spoke of the mutual commitment of the contracting parties to oppose aggressors and safeguard security.

The Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1921 was a milestone in the development of relations between the two neighbouring countries. The Iranian people, who had been oppressed for centuries, were for the first time able to breathe freely. Iran received gratis vast amounts of property and valuables from the Soviet government. The Soviet government's voluntary renunciation of all privileges and concessions formerly enjoyed by Russia in Iran was an act unheard of in the practice of relations between a great power and a small state.

The Treaty also had implications going far beyond the relations between the two countries. It provided a basis for the strengthening of Iran's position vis-à-vis other states. At the same time the Treaty was an important factor for peace and security in the whole of the Middle East.

The Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1921 dealt a serious blow at imperialism and its colonial system. The nations which languished under the yoke of imperialist treaties compared them with the treaty signed between Soviet Russia and Iran and could readily see that two opposite social systems had two opposite lines in foreign policy. The Treaty of 1921 demonstrated to all the dependent and oppressed nations the main principles of international relations of which the new, socialist society was the proponent.

Backed by the Soviets, Iran succeeded in securing withdrawal of British troops from its territory, and in 1921 annulled the crippling Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919.

Soviet-Afghan Agreement

Apart from Germany and the other parties to the Brest Peace Treaty, Afghanistan was the first state with which Soviet Russia established diplomatic relations.

Afghanistan, like Iran, was oppressed by British imperialism. The people of Afghanistan, however, did not want to be under the sway of

foreign imperialists. The victory of the October Revolution in Russia gave a boost to the national liberation movement. The establishment of Soviet government in Turkestan, in particular, exerted a powerful influence on that movement.

Afghanistan achieved independence in 1919. The Afghan government immediately tried to establish links with Soviet Russia through Tashkent. On April 7, 1919, the newly enthroned Emir Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan sent a message to the Chairman of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, M. I. Kalinin, expressing the wish to establish friendly relations with Soviet Russia. "Because you...," wrote the Emir, "together with your comrades—friends of humanity, have undertaken the honourable and noble mission of concerning yourselves about the peace and well-being of people and proclaimed the principle of freedom and equality of countries and nations of the whole world, I am happy, for the first time on behalf of Afghan people, who seek progress, to send to you this friendly message from independent and free Afghanistan."[10]

A letter from the Afghan Foreign Minister, Mahmoud Tarzy, attached to the message said that in sending his message Amanullah Khan sought to initiate friendship and establish friendly relations between Russia and Afghanistan.

The message was delivered to the Soviet government on May 21, 1919. Following the official proposal on establishing diplomatic relations an Extraordinary Afghan Mission, led by Muhammad Wali Khan, arrived in Tashkent.

On May 27, Lenin and Kalinin sent a reply message to the King of Afghanistan. In it the Soviet government recognised Afghanistan's independence. "The establishment of permanent diplomatic relations between the two great peoples," the message read in part, "will open broad opportunities for mutual help against any encroachments on the part of foreign predators on others' freedom and possessions."[11] Y. Surits, who was appointed the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the RSFSR to Central Asia, arrived in Afghanistan in the summer of 1919.

The establishment of relations between the two states enabled the Afghan government to establish contacts with other European countries via Russia.

Wali Khan's mission was delayed in Tashkent because Turkestan at the time was cut off from the centre by the Kolchak troops. It did not arrive in Moscow until October 10, 1919. The mission was received by the Collegium of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on October 12 and by Lenin on October 14. Lenin greeted the Ambassador as "a representative of the friendly Afghan people who were suffering and

[10] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 175.

[11] Ibid., p. 174.

fighting against the imperialist oppression".[12]

Thereupon the Afghan Embassy and the Soviet authorities embarked on prolonged negotiations of a treaty. They were prolonged not so much by long distances and difficult communications between the two countries as by Britain's interference. Having lost its domination over Afghanistan, British imperialism was trying hard to regain its positions. The British agents in Afghanistan were conducting propaganda against Soviet Russia. They spread absurd allegations about a Soviet crusade against Islam and tried to sow mistrust for the Soviet country. Britain used the reactionary groupings in Kabul playing on Pan-Islamic sentiments. Under the influence of British intrigues, the reactionary circles of Afghanistan rendered assistance to the Emir of Bokhara who was engaged in hostilities against the Soviet government. They supplied the Emir with arms and even rendered him direct military assistance in the struggle against the popular uprising. After the victory of popular rule in Bokhara documents were found there confirming Afghan interference in the internal affairs of Bokhara. The Soviet government had to protest to Kabul over the actions of the Afghan representatives in Bokhara which ran counter to the declaration of friendship and impeded the progress of the talks. In a reply the Afghan government blamed the misunderstanding on its Ambassador in Bokhara, said that the Ambassador had been removed from his post and recognised the treaty between Soviet Russia and the People's Republic of Bokhara.[13]

The treaty of friendship between Russia and Afghanistan was initialled in Kabul on September 13, 1920. In a letter to G. V. Chicherin on that occasion the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote: "Please believe me that the main reason that caused my Government to conclude a friendly agreement with the Government of the Russian Soviet Republic was the common policy of overthrowing imperialist despotism in the whole world and especially the policy of liberating all the peoples of the East, irrespective of nationality and creed, from the rule and tyranny of world predators, to which policy the Government of Your Excellency has paid serious attention."[14]

The British government took fresh steps to disrupt the signing of the Treaty. The British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon, twice, on October 1 and 9, 1920, addressed notes to the Soviet government accusing the latter of anti-British activity in Afghanistan. Curzon made a fantastic charge that the Soviet government had for many months been keeping some envoys in Afghanistan who were trying to sign a treaty with the Emir of Afghanistan with a clear aim of inciting an uprising among the indigenous tribes on the border with India.

[12] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 262.
[13] Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 199-200, 449.
[14] Ibid., p. 560.

In January 1921, the British Extraordinary Plenipotentiary in Kabul Dobbs proposed an Anglo-Afghan agreement that would annul the Soviet-Afghan Treaty. The British were prepared to allow Afghanistan to have only trade relations with Soviet Russia. The Afghan government, however, displayed firmness. Despite Britain's opposition, the Soviet-Afghan Treaty was signed in Moscow on February 28, 1921.

The parties recognised each other's independence and pledged respect for it. "The High Contracting Parties," the Treaty read in part, "recognise and accept the freedon of Eastern nations on the basis of independence and in accordance with the general wish of each nation."[15] The parties also bound themselves (Article 2) "not to enter into any military or political agreement with a third state which might prejudice one of the Contracting Parties". Russia granted Afghanistan the right to free and customs-exempt transit through her territory of goods bought both in Russia and in other countries. The Soviet land also agreed to render Afghanistan financial and other material assistance. In particular, the Soviet government undertook to supply Afghanistan with planes and set up an aviation school there, to supply 5,000 rifles with necessary ammunition, to build a factory to manufacture smokeless powder, to supply equipment for the telegraph line Kushka-Herat-Kandahar-Kabul, to send technical and other experts to Afghanistan, and to give it a free loan to the tune of 1,000,000 gold roubles.

The Soviet-Afghan Treaty was the first equal treaty Afghanistan had ever signed with a great power. Lenin spoke highly of its significance not only for the two participants but for all the countries of the East. Replying to the greetings and expression of joy on the part of the King of Afghanistan in connection with the Treaty and his confidence that the foundations of sincere relations between the two countries would grow still stronger in the future, Lenin wrote in early May 1921: "The Russian Soviet Government and the High Afghan State have common interests in the East, both States value their independence and want to see each other and all the peoples of the East independent and free. Both states are brought closer not only by the afore-mentioned circumstances but more particularly by the fact that there are no issues between Afghanistan and Russia that might cause differences and cast even a shadow on the Russian-Afghan friendship." Stressing that old imperialist Russia had gone for ever and that Afghanistan's northern neighbour was now Soviet Russia which extended a hand of friendship and brotherhood to all the peoples of the East and in the first place to the Afghan people, Lenin emphasised the following: "The High Afghan State was one of the first states whose representatives we gladly met in Moscow and we are happy to note that the first treaty on friendship signed by the Afghan

[15] Ibid., p. 552.

people was the treaty with Russia."[16]

Under the Treaty signed, the Soviet government rendered considerable assistance to friendly Afghanistan. Measures were taken to expand trade and ensure the transit of goods bought by Afghanistan in Western Europe. Soviet experts and workers built a radio station in Kabul. It began its work on September 18, 1920, by broadcasting the following radiogram from the King of Afghanistan: "In the first radiogram sent over the radio station which we have received as a gift and which is of great value for me, I express my appreciation to our deeply respected Comrade Lenin."[17]

On March 12, 1921, the Soviet government contributed its first payment (120,000 gold roubles) under the aid scheme. The next payment amounted to 500,000 gold roubles and was made in August 1921, *i. e.*, after the Afghan government had ratified the Treaty.

On November 7, 1921, 25 specialists from Soviet Russia arrived in Kabul. Before the end of 1923 the Soviet government had fully fulfilled its other obligations as part of aid to Afghanistan provided for in the Treaty. Soviet assistance contributed substantially to Afghanistan's defence of its independence.

In developing friendly relations with Afghanistan and other Eastern countries on the basis of equality, Soviet Russia refrained from the slightest interference in their internal affairs. This was clearly stated in the instructions of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin to the Soviet Ambassador in Kabul of June 3, 1921, which said: "You must avoid at any cost the fatal mistake of trying to impose communism on that country. We have told the Afghan government: We have our system and you have yours.... We do not interfere in your internal affairs. We do not intrude upon the activity of your people.... We do not for a moment contemplate imposing on your people a programme which is alien to it at the present stage of its development."[18]

The ban on interference in the internal affairs covered all the representatives of the Soviet state in all foreign countries. Later, when a "spate of recognitions" set in, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs saw it fit to formulate the directives to Soviet Ambassadors in a special document which was endorsed by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR on November 21, 1924 as a Decree on Directives to Ambassadors: "One need hardly say," the decree read in part, "that embassies are appointed on both sides for purposes excluding propaganda in the country to which they are accredited. Soviet embassies observe and shall observe that principle unconditionally and strictly."

[16] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, Moscow, 1960, pp. 93-94.
[17] Ibid., Vol. III, p. 140.
[18] Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 167.

The new principles of foreign and nationalities policy proclaimed by the Soviet state were vividly demonstrated in the Soviet government's policy towards Turkey.

In the early months after the October Revolution of 1917 Turkey was waging war against Russia on the German side. Together with Germany it was bound by the Brest Treaty. The Turkish ruling circles launched invasion of the Caucasus in violation of the Brest Treaty.

Turkey, however, did not withstand the test of war and shared the fate of other defeated powers of the Quadruple Alliance.

On October 30, 1918, the Entente made Turkey sign an armistice at Mudros (on the Aegean Sea). The victors occupied the ports on the Dardanelles and Bosphorus and forced an opening of the Straits for their warships, occupied Istanbul (Constantinople), demanded full demobilisation of the Turkish army and established control over all the railways, postal and wire services. The Mudros Armistice marked the beginning of the division of Turkey. President Wilson of the USA laid claims to some Turkish territories at the Paris Peace Conference. The question was also discussed of granting the USA a mandate over Istanbul and the area of the Straits. Turkey was thus threatened with complete loss of national independence.

The defeat in the war and the ideas of the October Revolution triggered a national liberation movement in Turkey against internal reaction and the Entente imperialism, a movement headed by Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Soviet Russia came to the aid of the Turkish people in its hard struggle.

On September 13, 1919, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the RSFSR appealed to the workers and peasants of Turkey. "Comrade workers and peasants of Turkey," read the document, "Your brothers, the Russian workers and peasants, having experienced the villainy of all the domestic predators and vampires who were selling Russia to foreign predators—the European robbers, decided to take the reigns of power in their own hand. And now for almost two years they have been fighting for their rule, the rule of the working people.

"The day is not far away when Labour will triumph over Capital in Soviet Russia and the enemies of Labour will stop their attacks on it.

"But that is not enough. It is necessary that the working people of all countries unite against the enslavers of the world.

"The workers' and peasants' government of Soviet Russia hopes therefore that you, the workers and peasants of Turkey, having experienced all the hardship at such a decisive and responsible moment, will extend a fraternal hand in order together to drive off the European predators and to destroy and deprive of power inside the country those who have grown accustomed to base their happiness on

your unhappiness."[19]

In April 1920 revolutionary government was set up in Turkey with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk at the head.[20] He made Ankara his capital. Revolutionary Turkey immediately was confronted with fierce enmity of the imperialist powers of the Entente, especially Britain. As early as April 26, Kemal Pasha appealed to Soviet Russia proposing to establish diplomatic relations and conclude a military alliance between the two countries. His letter also asked for help to embattled Turkey.

On June 3, 1920, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs informed Kemal Pasha that the Soviet government was satisfied to learn about the basic principles of the foreign policy of the new Turkish government. "The Soviet government," read the letter of the People's Commissar, "takes into due account the decision of the Grand National Assembly to coordinate your work and military operations against the imperialist states with the lofty ideal of the liberation of the oppressed peoples."[21]

The Soviet government also agreed to immediately establish diplomatic and consular relations with Turkey and get down to negotiations. It said it was ready to act as an intermediary in the negotiations between Turkey and Armenia (which was ruled by the counter-revolutionary bourgeois party of Dashnaks) and Iran.

"The Soviet government," the letter said in conclusion, "is watching the heroic struggle the Turkish people are waging for their independence with the keenest interest, and in these days of difficulty for Turkey it is happy to lay a firm foundation for a friendship which will bind the Turkish and Russian peoples."[22]

On July 4, 1920, the Foreign Minister of Revolutionary Turkey, Bekir Sami Bey, informed the Soviet government that the Turkish government had received the letter with "the liveliest pleasure and satisfaction". The Turkish national government also regarded approvingly the Soviet government's offer of its services as intermediary.

"The Turkish Grand National Assembly is confident," stressed Bekir Sami Bey, "that in this unequal struggle on which it has embarked and on whose outcome depends its own existence, and the common cause of the whole suffering mankind, it will find every possible support on the part of the great Russian Soviet Republic which has openly proclaimed itself a liberator of the oppressed and an uncompromising enemy of capitalists and imperialists."[23]

[19] *Izvestia*, September 13, 1919.

[20] Kemal Pasha was later named Atatürk (i.e., "Father of the Turks") for his great services to Turkey.

[21] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 555.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., p. 556.

The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs informed Mustafa Kemal in its letter of July 2 that a Soviet government representative was going to Turkey. For its part, a Turkish delegation led by Bekir Sami Bey arrived in Moscow where a draft Russo-Turkish treaty was worked out. Bekir Sami Bey returned to Turkey in the autumn of 1920 taking the draft with him.

Meanwhile the Sultan's government, which still sat in Constantinople under the protection of Anglo-French bayonets, signed the inequitable peace treaty of Sevre with the Entente on August 20, 1920, whereby Turkey lost much of its territory. The government of revolutionary Turkey refused to recognise that plunderous treaty and came out against the treacherous government of the Sultan.

Britain and France used every threat and promise to keep the government of revolutionary Turkey from negotiating with Soviet Russia. They made use to that end of the reactionary elements of the Turkish bourgeoisie who opposed close relations with Soviet Russia and favoured agreement with imperialist powers. These elements dreamt of territorial conquests in Transcaucasia. Under the pressure of reactionary forces, the Kemal government renounced its earlier agreement to mediation of the Soviet government in talks with the Dashnak-ruled Armenia. It launched an armed attack on Armenia and routed the weak army of the Dashnak government. Blinded by class hatred for the Soviet country, the latter signed a humiliating Alexandropol Treaty with Turkey on December 2, 1920, under which the whole territory of Armenia, with the exception of the area around Yerevan and Lake Gokcha (Sevan), became virtually a Turkish protectorate. The government of the RSFSR did not recognise the Alexandropol Treaty as by the time of its signing the Dashnak delegation no longer represented the government of Armenia. The establishment of Soviet government in Armenia on November 29, 1920, disrupted the criminal conspiracy against the Armenian people.

The adventure of the Turkish reactionary circles diverted considerable forces for aggression against Armenia, thus weakening Turkey's stand in the struggle against the imperialists. Matters for revolutionary Turkey took a sharp turn for the worse in connection with the offensive launched against it by the Greek troops which were a tool of British imperialism. In these conditions help from Soviet Russia became crucial for Turkey. The reactionary opposition within the Kemal government was prevailed upon and in February 1921 a Turkish delegation once more set out for Moscow to conclude the talks. It was headed by Yusuf Kemal Bey, member of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

In the course of the negotiations, however, the Turkish side again attempted to disrupt the signing of a treaty with Soviet Russia and to use the negotiations merely as a means to induce British imperialism to make some concessions. When the Turkish delegation was in

Moscow Bekir Sami Bey led another delegation to London where a conference of the victor nations was taking place. The British Premier Lloyd George told Bekir Sami Bey that Britain was ready to grant to Turkey protectorate over the whole of Transcaucasia, including the oil-fields of Baku. He hoped that this proposal would disrupt the Soviet-Turkish talks, would set Turkey against Russia, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, and deprive it of Soviet help. Reports of these secret talks leaked to the press. Chicherin drew the attention of the Turkish delegation to these provocative British schemes. "I will permit myself to ask, therefore," wrote the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in connection with the Turkish delegation's talks in London, "whom does Bekir Sami Bey represent, Constantinople [i.e., the Sultan—*Ed.*] or Angora [Ankara—*Ed.*]? If the latter is the case, is there not a change of course, of which if it is so Turkey must have notified us in advance in accordance with our decision of last year? "[24]

The Turkish delegation, acting on instructions from Ankara, replied that it was aware of the provocative nature of the British manoeuvres. The delegation pledged the sincerity of the Kemal government's desire to conclude a treaty with Soviet Russia.

Addressing a plenary meeting of the Russo-Turkish conference in Moscow on February 26, 1921, Chicherin, who headed the Soviet delegation, stressed the importance of friendly relations between Soviet Russia and the countries of the East. He said: "The friendship of the peoples of the East is for us the main condition of our international life and at the same time friendship with us must form the basis of Turkey's political position. Our moral and political strength is inseparable from our union with the peoples of the East fighting for their liberation. The friendship linking us must develop in our mutual interests, in the interests of all the peoples fighting against the tyranny coming from abroad. That friendship must find its expression in a formal and final treaty binding our peoples."[25]

In his reply speech the head of the Turkish delegation, Yusuf Kemal Bey, unreservedly recognised the common interests of Turkey and Soviet Russia and the need for cooperation between them. "I shall refrain here from citing historical facts," he said, "but I can assure all the working people of Russia, the peasants, workers and soldiers, that the Turkish people are holding out their hand sincerely."[26] And Yusuf Kemal Bey followed up that idea by saying, "Geographical, historical, economic, and political conditions show us the way to Russia. Before the representatives of the new Russia I speak with the sincerity typical of the Turk: believe in us."[27]

[24] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, pp. 589-90.

[25] *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, No. 2, 1958, p. 156.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

The negotiations ended on March 16, 1921, with the signing of the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Friendship and Fraternity.[28] The preamble said that the two governments "sharing the principles of brotherhood of nations and the right of the peoples to self-determination, noting the solidarity existing between them in the struggle against imperialism as well as the fact that any difficulties created for one of the two peoples worsen the position of the other, and inspired entirely by the desire to establish between them constant cordial relations and inseparable sincere friendship based on the mutual interests of the two Parties, have decided to conclude the Treaty of Friendship and Fraternity".

Under Article 1 each of the parties was bound in principle "not to recognise any peaceful treaties or any international conventions which would be imposed on the other Contracting Party against its will". The Soviet government agreed "not to recognise any international acts concerning Turkey that have not been recognised by the National Government of Turkey now represented by its Grand National Assembly".

The Treaty determined the northeastern border of Turkey and gave Turkey the Ardahan and Kars districts. Under Article 2 Turkey was to evacuate Batum and the surrounding territory and "cede it" to Georgia on condition of unimpeded and tax-free transit through the Batum port to and out of Turkey. The Nakhichevan Region was recognised as an autonomous territory under the state sovereignty of Soviet Azerbaijan. "Both Contracting Parties, stating the link between the national and liberation movement of the peoples of the East and the struggle of the working people of Russia for a new social system," unconditionally recognised the rights of these peoples to freedom and independence and their right to choose a form of government in accordance with their wishes. Both sides declared null and void all the old treaties, and the Soviet government declared that it considered Turkey free of any financial and other commitments undertaken under the former treaties Turkey had signed with the tsarist government. The government of the RSFSR recognised the regime of capitulation as incompatible with free national development of Turkey and as having lost all validity. The contracting parties agreed to prevent the formation or presence in their territories of organisations or groups claiming the role of government in another country or a part of its territory. The Treaty included a very important article (5) on the question of the Straits: "To ensure the opening of the Straits and free passage of merchant vessels for all nations, both Contracting Parties agree to hand over the task of finalising the international statute of the Black Sea and the Straits to a future Conference of littoral states on condition that its decisions would not prejudice the

[28] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, pp. 597-607.

full sovereignty of Turkey, as well as the security of Turkey, and her capital, Constantinople."[29]

Soviet Russia undertook a commitment with regard to Turkey (Article 15) to take steps concerning the Transcaucasian republics to ensure the "recognition by these republics, in treaties to be signed by them with Turkey, of the articles of the present Treaty which apply to them".[30]

The Soviet-Turkish Treaty, signed as it was while Kemal's Turkey was fighting against the Anglo-Greek intervention, had a far-reaching significance for Turkey. It strengthened her stand in the struggle for independence and enabled the Turkish government to seek equally favourable conditions in its negotiations with other states. The Treaty contributed to the strengthening of the new regime in Turkey.

In pursuance of its commitment under Article 15 of the Treaty, the Soviet government took an active part in preparing a treaty between Turkey and the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia. A treaty of friendship between Turkey, on the one hand, and Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, on the other, was signed at Kars on October 13, 1921, with the participation of the RSFSR. It repeated the main provisions of the Moscow Treaty between Soviet Russia and Turkey of March 16, 1921.

During the signing of the Moscow Treaty the representatives of the RSFSR and Turkey had exchanged notes which were an important addition to the Treaty. The Note of the Turkish Ambassador of March 16, 1921, read: "In order to establish between Turkey and Russia relations based on complete sincerity and finally eliminate everything that may violate full mutual trust, Turkey undertakes to inform the Russian Soviet government immediately, without delays, and in every detail, about every statement or proposal on the part of any Power pursuing an Asian policy different from that of Russia, on the question of rapprochement or agreement of that Power with Turkey, and equally undertakes henceforth to eventually inform the Russian Soviet government of all the talks between Turkey and any one of the afore-mentioned Powers.

"Turkey also undertakes not to sign any treaties that might affect the interests of Russia, without notifying the latter."[31]

In a reply Note of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, also dated March 16, 1921, the Soviet government took note of the said Turkish commitment and for its part undertook an analogous commitment vis-à-vis the Turkish government.[32]

In another Note dated March 16, 1921, the Turkish government

[29] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, p. 559.
[30] Ibid., p. 602.
[31] Ibid., p. 606.
[32] Ibid., pp. 606-07.

undertook on behalf of the National Assembly of Turkey that "in the event of the intention ... to introduce changes of a fundamental character in the foreign policy of Turkey vis-à-vis Russia or of a different orientation, the fact of such decision shall be immediately brought to the knowledge of your [Soviet–*Ed.*]Government".[33]

In a reply Note the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs gave an analogous commitment on behalf of Soviet Russia.

Along with the signing of the Moscow Treaty of March 16, 1921, the RSFSR and Turkey agreed on the granting of financial aid to Turkey amounting to 10 million gold roubles. Of these, 5.4 million roubles were handed over to Turkey in instalments during April, May, and June of 1921.

It was a difficult time for Soviet Russia. The country had yet to overcome economic dislocation. Even so, the Soviet government handed over to the Turkish government another 1.1 million gold roubles in late 1921.[34] It was highly necessary to buy arms and equipment for the Turkish army, without which Turkey would have found it difficult to continue its struggle against Greece, which enjoyed the support of British imperialism.

Soviet assistance to Turkey was not confined to financial aid. In 1921-22 M. V. Frunze went on an important mission to Turkey. Officially, the delegation was sent on behalf of the Ukrainian SSR in which he was Commander-in-Chief. Its official aim was to sign a treaty between Turkey and the Ukrainian SSR analogous to the Moscow Treaty. The decision on Frunze's mission was made at a crucial moment in the Greco-Turkish war when a decisive battle was imminent. In fact, the Frunze mission had implications far beyond the Ukrainian-Turkish relations.

Frunze set out for Turkey in November 1921. The trip was very tiring as Frunze and his party had to cover a large part of the way to Ankara by horse-drawn cart.

On December 20, 1921, Frunze spoke before the Turkish National Assembly. He publicly exposed the intrigues of the imperialist powers of the West aimed at undermining the Soviet-Turkish friendship. "It goes without saying," he stressed, "that they will try to appear as flattering friends and well-wishers and will exert every effort to undermine the friendship between the Turkish and Soviet governments which is the sole guarantee of the integrity and independence of Turkey, and, by pushing Turkey to come out against the Soviet government, will try, under a mask of friendship, to reach the goal which they have failed to reach with the help of arms."[35]

Frunze's arrival in Turkey was highly appreciated by Mustafa

[33] Ibid., p. 605.

[34] Ibid., p. 675.

[35] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, p. 782.

Kemal, who sent this telegram to the Chairman of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, M. I. Kalinin, and the Chairman of the All-Ukraine Central Executive Committee, G. I. Petrovsky.

"The fact that the government of the Ukrainian Republic, aiming to sign a friendship treaty with us and to reaffirm the political, economic, and other links existing between our peoples, sent to us Mr. Frunze, one of the top political leaders and Commander-in-Chief and one of the most valiant and heroic commanders of the Red Army, and the fact that the decision was communicated to us on the eve of the Sakari Battle [where the Turks defeated the Greeks—*Ed.*], while the enemies have been proclaiming to the whole world that our final defeat is a matter of the near future, evokes a particularly profound feeling of gratitude among the members of the National Assembly."[36]

At a difficult period, when the Soviet land was stricken by crop failures and famine, and when the dire aftermath of foreign armed intervention still had to be eliminated, the Soviet government rendered Turkey financial, military and other assistance. "As a result of the friendship established with the Russians," said Mustafa Kemal, "it was chiefly from them that we received substantial quantities of guns, rifles, and ammunition."[37] Thus, on December 29, 1921, and on April 29, 1922, the Soviet government handed over to the Turkish Consul in Novorossiisk mines and artillery hardware, a certain quantity of rifles, etc.; in 1922 Turkey received equipment for an ammunition factory; on May 3, 1922, the Soviet government handed over to Turkey 3.5 million roubles in gold, the last instalment of the ten million granted to the Turkish government. Frunze also handed over money for organising an orphanage in Turkey for children who had lost their parents at the front. The workers of Baku sent to Turkey a trainload of kerosene and petrol at a time when these fuels were scarce.

On January 2, 1922, a treaty between the Ukrainian SSR and Turkey was signed in Ankara. It repeated the main terms of the Soviet-Turkish Treaty of 1921.

"The visit of Comrade Frunze has left a deep mark here," reported S. I. Aralov, the RSFSR Ambassador to Turkey. "He is referred to as a wonderful and warm man, is regarded as a great friend of Turkey and he has dispelled all the misunderstandings and turned the sympathies of the Turks towards the RSFSR. He is, of course, regarded as a representative of the whole RSFSR, and not only of the Ukraine, and his words, promises, speeches, and judgements are taken as the opinions of the whole RSFSR."[38]

[36] Ibid.

[37] M. Kemal, *The Road of New Turkey, 1919-1927*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1934, p. 310 (in Russian).

[38] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, pp. 782-83.

Mustafa Kemal attached great significance to new Turkey's friendship with Soviet Russia. In a radiogram to Lenin sent on December 18, 1920, he declared: "Firmly convinced that only our close cooperation would lead us to the desired goal I welcome any further consolidation of the friendly ties linking us. I express to you my deep appreciation for the farsighted policy which, on Your High initiative, is being pursued by the Soviet Republic both in the East and in the whole world."[39]

Subsequently, while Turkey was headed by Kemal Pasha, it maintained the friendliest of relations with the Soviet country. The Treaty of Friendship and Fraternity of 1921 served as an invariable and reliable basis for them.

And the Treaty was highly assessed in the telegram of the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR to the Turkish head of state and Prime Minister of March 15, 1961, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Treaty. "That historic treaty," read the telegram, "signed by our countries with the participation of V. I. Lenin and K. Atatürk in the years when both countries struggled against the imperialist forces, contributed to the victory of the Turkish people in the national liberation war and the establishment of friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Turkey."[40]

Relations with China, Korea and Mongolia

From the early days of its existence the Soviet government exerted efforts to establish contacts and friendly relations with its great neighbour, China. It relinquished all the special rights and privileges of Russia in China and proposed to revise the inequitable treaties and base relations between the two countries on the principles of full equality. As early as May 1918, wishing to remove the obstacles in that way, it appealed to the Chinese government asking it to put a resolute end to the use of Chinese territory by the bands of Semyonov as a base for hostile actions against the Russian people.

The reactionary government in Peking not only failed to reply to that request but made it clear by its every action that it was not interested to see its relations with Soviet Russia normalised. On December 27, 1917, it banned the imports of food, including tea, to Soviet Russia. On January 11, 1918, the Chinese border was sealed and all movement of goods was stopped. In late March of that year

[39] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Radiogram from the President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Mustafa Kemal to Lenin of December 18, 1920; *Soviet-Turkish Relations. Collection of Documents*, Vol. I, *1917-1926*, Moscow, 1947, p. 69 (in Russian).

[40] *Pravda*, March 18, 1961.

the Peking government recalled its Envoy from Petrograd, thus breaking off the negotiations on the annulment of tsarist Russia's inequitable treaty with China of 1896 and the Peking Protocol of 1901. Moreover, it took part in the armed intervention against the Soviet land. Chinese troops were among the forces of the 14 states which invaded the Soviet Republic and shed the blood of Soviet civilians. On May 16, 1918, Japan and China signed a secret military agreement spearheaded against Soviet Russia which was supplemented by a naval agreement three days later. On August 24, 1918, the Peking government announced that it was sending troops to Siberia to help the Allies in their struggle against the rule of workers and peasants there. It continued to maintain relations with the mission and consulates of the tsarist government and did not allow Soviet representatives into the country. By May 1918 the actions of the Semyonov bands brought traffic on the Manchurian Railway and trade and economic relations between Soviet Russia and China to a standstill. Some of Semyonov's units consisted wholly of Chinese. The Chinese government repeatedly promised to put an end to Semyonov's activity on its territory but it failed to fulfil these promises. It declined the Soviet proposal on liquidation of the bands "by Soviet troops within Chinese territory jointly with the regular Chinese troops or independently, without the assistance of the latter".[41]

Progressive public opinion in China took a different attitude towards Soviet Russia. The great Chinese democrat Sun Yat-sen sent to the Soviet government a message in which he noted the common goals of the Russian and Chinese revolutions aimed at liberating the workers and establishing lasting peace.

Replying to Sun Yat-sen on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars, Chicherin wrote: "In this hour of trial, when the imperialist governments are stretching their greedy hands from the east and west, from the north and south in order to crush the Russian Revolution and to deprive the Russian peasants and workers of the gains they have made during this revolution, the kind of revolution the world had never seen before, and when the government of Peking set up by foreign bankers is ready to join these plunderers, at such a moment the Russian working classes appeal to their Chinese brothers and call them for joint struggle."[42]

The Soviet people were aware that China had been drawn into the armed intervention against the will of the Chinese people. The Soviet government continued its consistent policy of friendship with regard to China. An example of such policy is the decision of the All-Russia

[41] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. I, p. 340.

[42] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. The letter of G. V. Chicherin, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to the Chinese revolutionary Dr. Sun Yat-sen of August 1, 1918.

Central Executive Committee of December 2, 1918, whereby the RSFSR renounced the Russian share of the so-called "Boxer indemnity".[43]

On July 25, 1919, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR appealed to the governments of South and North China with the declaration expressing the readiness of the Soviet government to agree with China to eliminate once and for all the acts of violence and injustice committed by the tsarist government with regard to the people of China. The Soviet government informed them of its renunciation of Russia's share of the "Boxer indemnity" and offered to open official relations. In conclusion the Soviet government appealed to the people of China to establish a militant alliance against imperialism. "If the Chinese people want to become free ..., like the Russian people, let them understand that their sole ally and brother in the struggle for freedom is the Russian worker and peasant and his Red Army."[44] The Peking (Northern) government did not reply to this appeal despite the fact that it evoked a lively response among the broad masses of the Chinese people. This was confirmed in the reply of the Southern Chinese government which informed the head of the Soviet government that "the appeal of the Workers' and Peasants' Government to the Chinese people has already reached China and the whole people of China are exceedingly grateful".

The Far Eastern Republic, formed on April 6, 1920, appealed in May of that same year to the Peking government proposing a conference of the RSFSR, the Far Eastern Republic, and China to settle all disputed questions.

The talks of the Far Eastern Republic's mission in Peking which began in August and the visit of a Chinese military-diplomatic mission to Russia in September 1920 eliminated a serious obstacle in the way of normalising Soviet-Chinese relations: the Chinese government withdrew recognition of the mission and consulates of the tsarist government. Although the talks failed to achieve the main goal of establishing official relations, they nevertheless initiated de facto relations.

During the stay of the Far Eastern Republic's delegation in Peking the Soviet government in its Appeal to the Chinese government of September 27, 1920, reiterated its terms for normalising relations between the two countries which elaborated the principles set forth in the Declaration of July 25, 1919. In a reply message, received in Moscow on March 1, 1921, the Chinese government evinced the desire to start direct negotiations with the RSFSR government on questions raised in the Soviet proposals, "as well as on all the questions con-

[43] The indemnity was imposed on China by imperialist powers after they suppressed the people's (Boxer) uprising of 1900-01.

[44] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. II, p. 223.

cerning the interests of the two Great Republics which will be submitted for discussion by the Chinese Government".[45]

During the Peking talks the mission of the Far Eastern Republic proposed to establish diplomatic and consular relations and sign a trade agreement. The Chinese government sidestepped these issues. At the same time it agreed to receive a delegation of the RSFSR. The mission of the RSFSR to Peking in December 1921 was also fruitless. The delegation failed to start official negotiations.

Along with efforts to normalise relations with China the Soviet government took steps to establish links with the representatives of the Korean and Mongolian peoples.

Soon after independent Korea was proclaimed on March 30, 1919, the RSFSR appealed to the Korean revolutionary organisations and the Korean people to launch joint actions against the Japanese invaders. The Appeal said that "it is only by joint efforts that we could drive the Japanese out of Vladivostok and from the Land of Morning Calm".[46]

The complex military and political situation in the Far East during the Civil War, however, prevented further development of the relations between Korea and Soviet Russia.

Soviet-Mongolian relations made better headway. As early as February 1918 the Soviet government informed the government of Autonomous Mongolia that Soviet Russia had abandoned for ever the policy pursued in Mongolia by tsarism and renounced the plunderous and crippling agreements of the tsarist time, annulled Mongolia's debts on loans to old Russia and recognised the Mongolian people's right to independence. The government of the RSFSR declared it was ready to establish equal relations with the Mongolian state.

On August 3, 1919, the government of Soviet Russia renewed its appeal to the people and government of Mongolia declaring its renunciation of all the advantages and privileges which tsarist Russia had in Mongolia. "Mongolia," said the Appeal, "is a free country.... All power in the land must belong to the Mongolian people. No foreigner has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of Mongolia. The Soviet government by heralding this to the Mongolian people proposes that they enter into immediate diplomatic relations with the Russian people and send the envoys of the free Mongolian people to meet the Red Army."[47]

The Chinese militarists, taking advantage of the Civil War in Russia and the armed intervention of imperialist powers, moved their troops

[45] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, p. 584.

[46] *Izvestia*, August 15, 1919.

[47] Quoted in: *Essays in the History of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party*, Moscow, 1971, p. 19 (translated into Russian from the Mongolian).

into Mongolia in October 1918 in an attempt to re-establish their colonial domination. They sought to prevent links between Mongolia and Soviet Russia. The revolutionary organisations which sprang up in Mongolia under the influence of the October Revolution appealed to Soviet Russia for help. Such help was all the more urgent because the whiteguard bands, driven by the Red Army, were retreating into its territory and in October 1920 the unit of Baron Ungern invaded the country.

The Mongolian revolutionaries appealed for help from Soviet Russia immediately after the publication of the Appeal of August 3, 1919. In the autumn of 1920 they sent a delegation to Moscow which conveyed a request for assistance to the Mongolian people in their struggle against foreign invaders.

Set up on March 13, 1921, the Provisional People's Government reiterated that request the following day. "The Provisional People's Government of Mongolia ... appeals to the Government of the RSFSR, the champion of the freedom for the oppressed peoples, with an urgent request to immediately help the Provisional People's Government of Mongolia by energetic measures to eliminate the atrocities and pillage of the Russian whiteguards and clear the whole territory of Mongolia from the whiteguard bands thus allowing our free Mongolian people to decide their destiny themselves and thereby to initiate the friendship and mutual assistance of the free peoples of the two friendly countries."[48]

In March 1921 units of the People's Army of Mongolia inflicted a defeat on the Chinese troops near Maimachen, but they found it impossible to overpower the troops of Ungern and the Mongolian feudal lords.

The Mongolian People's Army, the Red Army and units of the People's Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic joined to defeat the bands of Ungern and other whiteguards and liberated the capital of Mongolia, Urga, on July 6, 1921. On July 12 the permanent People's Government, formed on the eve, asked the Soviet government not to withdraw its troops pending the final liquidation of the whiteguards and consolidation of the people's rule.

In October 1921 a Mongolian delegation which included Sukhe Bator came to Moscow to negotiate the strengthening of friendship between the two countries and sign a treaty to the effect. The delegation was received by Lenin who in the course of the talk set out his views on the development of Mongolia towards socialism bypassing the capitalist stage.[49]

On November 5 the government of the RSFSR and the delegation

[48] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, p. 780.

[49] M. S. Kapitsa, V. I. Ivanenko, *Friendship Gained in Struggle*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 45-46 (in Russian).

of Mongolia signed an agreement on establishing friendly relations between the two countries which annulled the agreements and treaties between tsarist Russia and Mongolia. The two governments committed themselves to the principle of the most favoured nation in the political and economic relations with regard to each other and undertook to prevent the activity on their territory of organisations and groups hostile to the other side. The Agreement settled the consular and citizenship questions. The telegraph equipment installed in Mongolia under tsarism was handed over as a gift to the Mongolian government.

Describing these fundamentally new relations, Yumzhagiin Tsedenbal, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party and Chairman of the Presidium of the Grand People's Hural, said: "It was a great revolutionising factor for the Mongolian people that the government of Soviet Russia, immediately after the victory of the October Revolution, annulled all the inequitable treaties and agreements imposed on Mongolia by Russian tsarism, recognised the inalienable right of the Mongolian people to independence and sovereignty, and expressed its readiness to establish with Mongolia relations of full equality and mutual respect."[50]

The Soviet-Mongolian Agreement of 1921 put a legal seal on economic and political cooperation between the peoples of Soviet Russia and Mongolia and laid a solid foundation for fraternal friendship between the peoples of the two countries. Based on entirely new socialist principles of international relations, that cooperation was a reliable guarantee of state sovereignty and independence. Backed by the aid and support of the USSR, and overcoming its age-old backwardness, Mongolia embarked on building a new socialist society bypassing the capitalist stage of development.

That marked the fruition of Lenin's great prediction that "with the aid of the proletariat of advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage".[51]

* * *

The triumph of the October Revolution in Russia, followed by the Red Army's victory over the interventionists and its advance to the former borders of Russia in Transcaucasia and Central Asia inspired the peoples of the East to struggle against imperialism and contrib-

[50] *Problemy Dalnego Vostoka*, No. 4, 1974, p. 7.

[51] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 244.

uted to a mighty upsurge of national liberation movement in China, India, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Mongolia and other Asian countries.

In its relations with the oppressed peoples of the East the Soviet government was guided by the Leninist principle of self-determination of nations. The Communist Party and the Soviet government set about implementing that principle at home immediately after the Great October Revolution. And the Soviet government proclaimed the same principle on the international arena. In entering upon negotiations with Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, the Soviet government treated the then semi-colonial countries as equal sovereign sides.

For the first time in their history, these countries had established genuinely equal relations with a great European power. The treaties signed in 1921 with Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey went a long way to strengthen their independence and their stand in the face of imperialist powers. At the same time these treaties secured the Soviet southern borders and contributed towards peace in the Middle East.

By establishing a new type of relations with the countries of the East the Soviet Union demonstrated to the people of all enslaved countries that a state had appeared in the world which espoused the principle of recognition and support of independence, sovereignty and equality of all states and peoples, large and small.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S STRUGGLE TO NORMALISE POLITICAL RELATIONS AND ESTABLISH TRADE AND ECONOMIC TIES WITH CAPITALIST STATES (1921-1923)

Foreign Policy Tasks of the USSR in the New Conditions of Peaceful Relations with the Capitalist States

The defeat of the foreign interventionists and internal counter-revolutionaries marked a basic change in the international position of the Soviet state. Lenin wrote: "... We have something more than a breathing-space: we have entered a new period, in which we have won the right to our fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist states."[1] It was a feature of the new period that armed struggle between the states of the two systems gave way to an uneasy peace between them, when political struggle was pursued by "peaceful" methods. True, the peace of the Soviet land was repeatedly violated by brief local armed conflicts.

The imperialists had not given up their struggle against Soviet Russia. The more bellicose imperialist circles still cherished hopes of a repeated armed intervention, arming and inciting Soviet Russia's neighbours whom they regarded as instruments in their policy of strangling the Soviet state. A large-scale aggression against the USSR, however, did not materialise until the summer of 1941 when it was attacked by nazi Germany.

The main methods of struggle against the Soviet land at the time were financial and economic boycott, non-recognition of the Soviet government and the policy of isolating the Soviet state. The imperialists hoped that Soviet Russia would be unable to overcome economic dislocation and restore her economy and would thus become dependent on the capitalist world.

The working people of Soviet Russia were confronted with formidable challenges. They had, within a brief space of time, to heal the wounds inflicted by the war, intervention and internal counter-revolution, and restore industry, transport and agriculture in order to go on building socialism. "This specific feature of the problem," wrote Lenin at the time, "of not being able to reduce our military forces, yet at the same time having to switch the whole of the Soviet state machine which is geared to war on to the new course of peaceful economic development, demands exceptional attention."[2]

A new set of economic priorities corresponding to the new situa-

[1] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 412.
[2] Ibid., Vol. 30, p. 332.

tion had to be determined. These tasks were proclaimed by the Tenth Congress of the Party which, on Lenin's suggestion, took a key decision to inaugurate the New Economic Policy.

Lenin had this to say about the international significance of the country's economic efforts: "We are now exercising our main influence on the international revolution through our economic policy.... The struggle in this field has now become global. Once we solve this problem, we shall have certainly and finally won on an international scale."[3] Lenin had a profound belief that "our communist economic development will become a model for a future socialist Europe and Asia".[4] If socialism in the country were to be built there had to be favourable international conditions, namely, peace and economic cooperation with other countries.

The Soviet foreign policy faced the task of making the hard-won peaceful respite into lasting peace, of breaking the country's foreign political and economic isolation and establishing "firm constant peaceful relations with all other countries".[5]

The Tenth Congress emphasised the need to use foreign technology and equipment and to invite foreign investment. It named the concession as a practicable form of paricipation of foreign capital in the development of Soviet Russia's natural resouces.

Lenin repeatedly addressed himself to the question of concessions before and after the Tenth Party Congress. Thus, in his report to the RCP (B) group at the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in December 1920 Lenin considered the question of concessions not only as a means to speed the country's economic rehabilitation. He pointed out that the real value of the matter lay "in its political interest"[6] inasmuch as concessions would contribute to stronger peace, improve the Soviet Republic's international position and avert the danger of a new intervention. The establishment of business relations with the capitalists would have made it more difficult "for capitalist powers that enter into deals with us to take part in military action against us".[7]

The solution of the question of business cooperation between the Soviet country and the capitalist states depended not only, or largely, on the Soviet government, but on the ruling circles of the capitalist countries.

Among the ruling circles in the capitalist countries at the time plans were harboured for the subjugation of the Soviet state. Accordingly, the imperialist governments, while signing trade agreements,

[3] Ibid., Vol. 32, p. 437.

[4] Ibid., Vol. 31, p. 518.

[5] *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, p. 266.

[6] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 467.

[7] Ibid., p. 481.

initially refused to establish normal diplomatic relations and recognise Soviet Russia de jure. Lenin attached particular significance to trade talks with Britain. On his initiative, the question was discussed at the meetings of the Politburo, the Council of People's Commissars and at plenary meetings of the Central Committee. Lenin spoke about it at the Tenth Congress of the Party and at the Eighth Congress of Soviets, and he highly appreciated the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement signed on March 16, 1921.[8]

The signing of that agreement facilitated the conclusion of the Soviet-German Trade Agreement on May 6, 1921. Germany went further than Britain recognising the Mission of the RSFSR as the sole legitimate representation of the Russian state in Germany and granting it diplomatic rights and privileges. Similar agreements were soon signed with Norway, Austria, Italy, Denmark and Chechoslovakia.

Famine in the Volga area tempted the ruling circles of France, the USA and other imperialist powers to make another attempt to force Soviet Russia to capitulate. That was highlighted by the decisions of the Brussels Conference of October 1921 in which the imperialists tried to make help to the famine-stricken conditional on the Soviet government's agreement to pay all the debts made by former Russian governments before and during the war and return all nationalised property to foreign capitalists.

As Lenin pointed out, they wanted to take advantage of the famine "to destroy the freedom we have won by our blood and to wrest power from the hands of workers and peasants".[9]

In view of the importance of settling relations with the capitalist countries, the Politburo of the Party CC, as early as September 1921, considered the question of prewar debts of tsarist Russia and decided that the Soviet state might recognise debts to certain countries, with the exception of war debts, indicating that it would only be possible if the Soviet counter-claims were recognised in principle, damage caused by the interventionists were compensated, credits made available to Soviet Russia and the Soviet government legally recognised.[10] Pursuant to that decision, the Politburo and the Soviet government exerted great efforts to settle political relations with the capitalist countries peacefully and establish business links with them. On October 28, 1921, it sent a Note to the governments of Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the USA pointing out that ever since the Great October Socialist Revolution "the Soviet Government has made economic cooperation with other Powers one of the main goals

[8] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 290.

[9] *Lenin Miscellany XXXIV*, p. 425.

[10] Central Party Archive of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CC CPSU (henceforth CPA IML), f. 17, op. 3, d. 201, l. 1.

of its policy".[11] The Note said that the Soviet government, in order to avert the threat of war and promote economic cooperation, was prepared to discuss recognition of Russia's prewar debts if the capitalist countries granted easy terms making it possible to repay these debts, undertook to stop any actions threatening "the security of the Soviet Republics and of the friendly Far Eastern Republic", guaranteed inviolability of their frontiers and concluded a final and general peace with the Soviet land. The Soviet government proposed an international economic conference to discuss that question.[12] It put before the capitalist states the question of business cooperation on the basis of equality.

The American government rejected all the Soviet appeals. Meanwhile part of the business community in the USA displayed more foresight than the US government. The joint-stock society Prodexco, set up in 1919, continued lively trade with the Soviet Republic.[13] In October 1921 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade of the RSFSR and an amalgamated American drugs and chemicals company signed an agreement whereby the USA was to supply one million poods of wheat to Soviet Russia.[14] The first 145, 000 poods out of that quantity were delivered as early as 1921.[15] A series of contracts were also in operation between individual US firms and Soviet economic organisations.[16] Thus, Soviet-American trade was gradually expanding, although the State Department did everything to impede it.

So, in 1921 despite the opposition of hostile forces the Soviet Republic had considerably expanded its foreign political and trade ties.[17]

Soviet Russia Prepares for the International Economic Conference

Before long the leading Western capitalist powers came to the conclusion that an international economic conference must be convened. The Supreme Allied Council at its conference at Cannes on January 6, 1922, passed a resolution calling such a conference. All European powers, including Soviet Russia, were invited

[11] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, p. 445.

[12] Ibid., p. 447.

[13] In May 1924 Prodexco merged with Arcos-Americana Inc. to form Amtorg society.

[14] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, pp. 442-44; *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*, p. 341.

[15] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IV, p. 793.

[16] Ibid., pp. 464-71, 610-13.

[17] *Soviet Russia and the Capitalist World in 1917-1923*, Moscow, 1957 (in Russian).

to send their representatives.

The Cannes Resolution read in part that the nations could not claim the right to dictate to each other the principles according to which they had to organise within their frontiers, their regime of property, their economy and their government; each country had the right to choose for itself the system which it preferred.

It will be seen, then, that the participants in the Cannes conference had to accept the inevitability of agreement between the two systems of property: the capitalist and the socialist, as represented at the time by Soviet Russia. At the same time the Cannes Declaration demanded the return of foreign property and recognition of the debts of former governments. That was proclaimed to be the necessary prerequisite for granting foreign credits.

The Supreme Allied Council also adopted a text of the invitation to Soviet Russia which expressed the wish that Lenin should take part in the conference.[18]

The Soviet government promptly agreed. The Central Committee of the RCP (B) took "very great pains to appoint a delegation of our best diplomats".[19] Lenin demanded that the Party should supervise all the preparations for the conference. "The Politburo should assume the closest and direct supervision of that matter," he wrote on January 16, 1922.[20]

The Extraordinary Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of January 27, 1922, appointed delegates to the conference, with Lenin as chairman. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin, was named deputy chairman of the delegation "with all the rights of chairman in case circumstances preclude Comrade Lenin's trip to the conference".[21] The delegation to the international economic conference was vested with broad powers for negotiating and signing agreements and treaties.

Considering the extreme importance of the first meeting between the representatives of the Soviet land and the capitalist world, the two sides prepared for it thoroughly.

The British and French governments decided to set up a commission of experts to work out a common programme to be presented to Soviet Russia. The commission, which met in London in March 1922, came up with the so-called Memorandum of London. It demanded the return of all nationalised foreign property in Russia, the payment of all prewar and war debts of the tsarist government, as well as the debts incurred by the bourgeois Provisional Government and other counter-revolutionary governments and their local bodies. The experts demand-

[18] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, Moscow, 1961, p. 48.

[19] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 263.

[20] CPA IML, f. 2, op. 1, d. 22638.

[21] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, p. 67.

ed for foreigners in Soviet Russia what amounted to extra-territorial rights, i. e., the establishment of a regime which imperialists commonly imposed on colonial countries.

The Soviet government too was conducting an all-round preparation for the conference. On Lenin's directions, the Politburo took direct charge of it. The Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Soviet government led by Lenin elaborated in detail the programme and tactics of the Soviet delegation taking into account all possible contingencies. "The Central Committee," Lenin pointed out, "has drawn up sufficiently detailed instructions for our diplomats...; we spent a long time discussing these instructions and considered and reconsidered them several times."[22] Lenin personally directed all the preparatory work. "Although in the winter of 1921-22 Vladimir Ilyich spent a long time in the country," wrote Chicherin, "he took a keen and ardent interest in the questions connected with the calling of the Genoa Conference. He wrote a number of memoranda on that question and the general content of our speeches in Genoa was established on the basis of his personal notes."[23]

Even before the conference opened, Lenin warned the imperialists that they could not intimidate Soviet Russia by threats.

The Soviet government from the outset made it abundantly clear that it would categorically reject any inequitable terms. Lenin wrote in one of his letters to Chicherin: "We shall *not accept* any unprofitable deal."[24] He stressed: "*We welcomed Genoa and would attend it*... to bargain for the most proper and most advantageous and politically suitable terms for ... trade...."[25]

The Draft Decision on the Tasks of the Soviet Delegation at Genoa[26] written by Lenin on February 24, 1922, pointed out that the aim of the Soviet delegation was to ensure durable peace and economic cooperation among the peoples, to establish trade relations between the Soviet Republic and the capitalist countries.

While urging the need to pursue a principled line and resolutely resist the brazen claims of the capitalist powers which aimed to enslave Soviet Russia economically and politically, Lenin demanded that the Soviet delegation seek equal and mutually beneficial agreements with the capitalist states. "In our programme," says the document, "we should, without concealing our communist views, confine ourselves to a brief and passing mention of them (for instance, in a subordinate clause), and to a forthright statement to the effect

[22] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 263-64; *Lenin Miscellany XIII*, p. 15.

[23] G. V. Chicherin, op. cit., p. 284.

[24] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 507.

[25] Ibid., Vol. 33, p. 213.

[26] Ibid., Vol. 42, pp. 401-03.

that we do not consider this the right place to preach our views, since we have come for trade agreements and for an attempt to reach an agreement with the pacifist section of the other (bourgeois) camp.

"One of our main, if not principal, political tasks at Genoa is to single out this wing of the bourgeois camp [i.e., the pacifist section *Ed.*] from the rest of the camp ... make it known that we consider possible and desirable not only a trade, but a political agreement with them....

"Everything possible and even impossible should be done to strengthen the pacifist wing of the bourgeoisie ... to disunite the bourgeois countries that will be united against us at Genoa ... to split the pacifist camp of the international bourgeoisie away from the gross-bourgeois, aggressive-bourgeois, reactionary-bourgeois camp."

In the Note of March 15, 1922, the Soviet government resolutely exposed the attempt of the imperialist Western powers to use the conference to impose on Soviet Russia a previously made decision. At the same time it expressed readiness to conduct negotiations on a broad basis. "The Russian Government," said the above-mentioned note, "while being aware of the fundamental differences existing between the political and economic regime of the Soviet Republic and the regime of bourgeois states, nevertheless considers it undoubtedly possible to have an agreement aimed at fruitful cooperation between both in the economic sphere.... The Soviet Governments will go to the Genoa Conference with a firm intention to enter into economic cooperation with all the states which mutually guarantee each other inviolability of their internal political and economic organisation...."[27]

Lenin also initiated and presided over the drafting of proposals on general reduction of armaments and armies, on a complete ban on the more barbarous means of warfare, such as the use of poison gases, aerial warfare, and other means of destruction directed against civilians. Lenin urged that these proposals, as well as those on economic cooperation, should be "voiced clearly and loudly"[28] at the forthcoming conference and that attempts should be made to elaborate them and have them published in the press.

In his Amendments and Remarks to the Draft Declaration of the Soviet Delegation for the Genoa Conference, Lenin proposed on March 23, 1922: "All mention of 'inevitable forcible revolution and the use of sanguinary struggle' must definitely be thrown out; ...we should speak only of the fact that ... we positively consider it our duty to give our fullest support to any attempts at a peaceful settlement

[27] *Materials of the Genoa Conference. Verbatim Record*, Moscow, 1922, pp. 38, 41 (in Russian).

[28] *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*, p. 455.

of outstanding problems." Lenin thought it necessary to exclude words to the effect that our conception of history presupposes inevitability of new world wars. "Under no circumstance should such frightful words be used, as this would mean playing into the hands of our opponents."[29]

Because only the representatives of the RSFSR from amongst the Soviet Republics were invited to the Conference and a single diplomatic front of the capitalist powers was being formed against the Soviet Republics, it was necessary to rally all the Soviet Republics round the RSFSR to jointly defend their interests from imperialist encroachments. So, along with working out the programme to be introduced at the Conference by Soviet Russia, the Politburo of the CC RCP (B) also dealt with such an important matter as creating a single Soviet delegation that would represent all the Soviet Republics. As early as January 20, 1922, the Politburo decided that it was necessary to set up a single diplomatic mission of all the Soviet Republics, the People's Republics of Bokhara and Khiva, and the Far Eastern Republic at the Genoa Conference.[30] This end was served by the RSFSR's agreement with eight independent friendly Soviet and People's Republics (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine, Khorezm, Bokhara, and the Far Eastern Republic) signed on February 22, 1922. Under that agreement the eight republics entrusted the government of Soviet Russia with representing and protecting their interests at the forthcoming conference, concluding and signing on behalf of all the republics treaties and agreements with foreign states, both those represented at the Conference and any other states.[31]

At the same time the Soviet government prepared its own claims to be presented to the Entente powers which took part in the armed intervention against the Soviet land. It was a counterblow at the plans of the imperialists. The Soviet government bodies had conducted a large amount of work to assess the damage caused to our country by the interventionists. The damage came to more than 39,000 million gold roubles.[32]

To prevent the formation of a solid anti-Soviet front the Soviet delegation, en route to Genoa, conferred with the representatives of Poland, Latvia, and Estonia in Riga on March 30. It succeeded in having the meeting adopt a recommendation to all the participants to coordinate their efforts at the Conference.[33]

[29] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 410.

[30] CPA IML, f. 17, op. 3, d. 255, l. 2.

[31] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, p. 111.

[32] *Foreign Policy of the USSR. Collection of Documents*, Vol. II (1921-1924), Moscow, 1944, p. 348 (in Russian).

[33] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, p. 174.

The Activity of the Soviet Delegation in Genoa

On the eve of the Genoa Conference, Chairman of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, M. I. Kalinin, gave an interview to the newspaper *Izvestia* in which he stated: "The very fact of the convening of the Genoa Conference is, in my opinion, recognition of the economic and political strength of the RSFSR by the West European governments".[34]

The Genoa Conference opened on April 10, 1922, with 29 states taking part.[35] The most important role among the capitalist delegations was played by representatives of Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, and Japan. The US "observer" also took an active part.

The positive impact of the Conference on the international position of the Soviet state was felt long before it started. The fact that the Soviet Republic had been invited to the Conference, said a review memorandum of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, "confirmed the recognition of Russia as a power whose participation in European affairs would be indispensable in the future".[36]

In view of the danger of assassination attempts on the part of imperialist agents, the Soviet people resolutely spoke against Lenin going to Genoa. The leading bodies were flooded with letters objecting to Lenin's going abroad. Taking into account public opinion and Lenin's worsened state of health, the Central Committee of the Party decided against Lenin going to Genoa. Even so, Lenin directed from Moscow all the activity of the Soviet delegation at the Conference. Chicherin guided the delegation on the spot.

The programme statement made by Chicherin at the Conference read in part: "Whilst themselves remaining faithful to communist principles, the Russian Delegation recognise that in the present period of history, which permits of the parallel existence of the ancient social order and of the new order now being born, economic collaboration between the states representing the two systems of property is imperatively necessary for the general economic reconstruction. The Russian Government, in consequence, attributes great importance to Point 1 of the Cannes Resolution which deals with reciprocal recognition of different systems of property and different political and economic forms actually existing in different countries. The Russian Delegation have come here not with the intention of making propaganda for their own theoretical views but in order to engage in practical relations with the governments and the industrial and commercial interests of all countries on the basis of reciprocity, equality, and

[34] *Izvestia*, April 10, 1922.

[35] 34 states including British dominions.

[36] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Review memorandum drawn up by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in early May, 1922.

complete and unconditional recognition."[37]

That statement of the Soviet delegation, which expressed the line developed by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and of the Soviet delegation, Lenin, and approved by the Politburo of the CC RCP (B), was an official public proclamation of the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence and cooperation of states with different social systems. The content of that statement (like that of many other Soviet foreign policy documents and statements made by Lenin) gives the lie to the allegations of bourgeois falsifiers of history that the principle of peaceful coexistence was not applied in Lenin's lifetime.

The Soviet delegation, guided by Lenin's directives, declared at the very first plenary session of the conference that it intended "to propose a universal reduction of armaments and support all the proposals aimed at alleviating the burden of militarism, provided the armies of all states are reduced and the rules of war are complemented by a complete prohibition of its more barbarous forms, such as poison gases, aerial warfare, and others, especially the use of means of destruction directed against civilian population".[38] Thus, the credit for being the first to raise the question of disarmament belongs to the founder of the Soviet state, Lenin. "Disarmament is the ideal of socialism," he wrote. "There will be no wars in socialist society, consequently, disarmament will be achieved."[39] As soon as the Soviet delegation read out its proposal on general disarmament, Louis Barthou, the head of the French delegation, leapt to his feet to object that the question of disarmament is not on the Conference's agenda and that if "the Russian delegation proposes that the first commission consider that question it would meet on the part of the French delegation not only with restraint, not only with protest, but with a clear and categorical, final, and resolute rejection".[40] Considering that the negative attitude to the question of disarmament voiced by Louis Barthou was actually shared by the governments of all the victor nations, which called the tune in Genoa, the Soviet delegation had to abandon its attempts to pursue that important question further.

Welcoming the idea of periodic international conferences proposed by the British Prime Minister, the Soviet delegation stressed the need to broaden them by including representatives of all peoples. "The establishment of universal peace," said the Soviet statement, "must be carried out by a World Congress convened on the basis of full equality of all peoples and recognition of the right of all of them to dispose of

[37] *Materials of the Genoa Conference, pp. 78-79; Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, pp. 191-92.

[38] Ibid., p. 193.

[39] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 95.

[40] *Materials of the Genoa Conference*, p. 83.

their own destiny."[41]

The Soviet proposals were enthusiastically received among the working masses in all countries. Telegrams and letters expressing approval of the Soviet delegation's activity came from everywhere. "The first statement on disarmament," wrote one of the members of the delegation, "made us the most popular name in the whole world."[42] While the Soviet proposals on general arms cuts were rejected by the capitalist states without any discussion, it detracted nothing from their significance and their popularity among the masses. Armed intervention had failed, and the imperialists were looking for alternative ways to enslave the Soviet country. The Western powers used the Genoa Conference to try to enslave Soviet Russia and draw it back into the capitalist system as an object of exploitation. "Genoa," wrote Chicherin, "was the climax of the programme of peaceful capitalist penetration into Russia."[43]

During the meeting of a subcommission of the political commission representatives of the imperialist powers presented to the Soviet delegation the London Memorandum of Experts[44] which demanded the return to foreign capitalists of nationalised factories and repayment of all the debts of the tsarist and Provisional governments. To carry out these plans, the imperialists intended to set up a Russian debt commission modelled on the commissions which operated in colonial dependencies. The idea was that the commission would have a chance to interfere in the internal affairs of the Soviet state. It was an obvious attempt to impose a capitulation regime on Soviet Russia.

By presenting such claims the imperialists pushed the Conference into a deadlock. There could be no negotiations on such a basis. The delegations of some capitalist countries realised that and evinced some readiness to look for a way out of the deadlock. There emerged differences between the delegations of Britain and France on debts of the overthrown governments, the return of industrial enterprises, and on credits.

Two main groupings were formed among the capitalist states: the Anglo-Italian and the Franco-Belgian. Delegations of other countries lined behind them. The Latvian delegate, the Foreign Minister Z. Meierovics, pointed out that Chicherin was "smilingly" driving a wedge between Britain and France and that the Conference (i. e., its capitalist participants *Ed.*) had split into two main groups (Britain-Italy and others and France-Belgium-Japan).[45] The irreconcilable

[41] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, p. 194.

[42] *Izvestia*, May 14, 1922.

[43] G. V. Chicherin, op. cit., p. 230.

[44] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, pp. 245-49.

[45] Central State Historical Archive of the Latvian SSR (henceforth CSHA

difference of economic interests made the front of bourgeois states unstable.

The contradictions among the delegations of the leading capitalist states were highlighted during the semi-official negotiations at Villa Albertis (residence of the British Premier, Lloyd George) held on April 14-15, 1922. The talks revolved around the key issues raised by the Memorandum of Experts. In reply to the claims advanced by the imperialists, the Soviet delegation on April 15, 1922, made public the counter-claims of Soviet Russia in connection with the vast damage caused by the interventionists to its economy.[46]

Lloyd George said on behalf of the "Allies" that they were prepared to partially renounce claims to the Soviet state to repay the military debts incurred by former governments of Russia (the British government wanted to create a precedent to absolve itself from paying its debts to the USA). The Entente made the condition, however, that the Soviet government renounce its demands for recovering damages caused by the intervention.[47] Lloyd George demanded that the Soviet government recognise in principle the right of foreign citizens to a retrieval of their nationalised property, and the repayment of prewar debts. He hinted that instead of restitution of the property of foreigners they could agree to compensation in the shape of long-term concessions, etc.

The French representatives took an even tougher stand and succeeded in frustrating the talks at Villa Albertis. However, the differences between the imperialist powers persisted.

An event that took place on April 16, 1922, widened the rift within the front of the capitalist states. On that day Soviet Russia and Germany signed a bilateral treaty in the Genoa suburb of Rapallo. Talks on settling disputed problems between them had been conducted in Berlin before the Genoa Conference but no treaty had been signed because the German government hoped to use its talks with Soviet Russia as a bargaining chip with the victor powers at the Genoa Conference. The representatives of these powers, however, did not meet German aspirations. The German ruling circles were worried by the fact that the committee of experts in its memorandum recognised Russia's right to obtain reparations from Germany.

On the other hand, Soviet Russia became an important factor of international politics, something the German rulers could not afford to ignore. The strengthening of the Soviet state as a result of the defeat of foreign interventionists and the firmness displayed by the Soviet delegation in Genoa all convinced the German government

of the Latvian SSR). Letter of the Latvian Foreign Minister Z. Meierovics to the Latvian Envoy to Finland, K. Zarins, of May 1, 1922.

[46] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, p. 732.

[47] Ibid., pp. 219-20.

that Soviet Russia was not capitulating in the face of the onslaught of the capitalist powers. The normalisation of relations with Soviet Russia was to improve Germany's international position and strengthen her hand in negotiations with the victor powers.

Economic links with Soviet Russia were also exceedingly important for the Germans. They expected to derive great benefits from the large and close-lying Soviet market which the German capitalists hoped to monopolise. The establishment of normal and friendly relations with Soviet Russia was insistently demanded by the working masses in Germany. "Because of that situation it is natural for Germany to be prompted towards an alliance with Russia," wrote Lenin.[48]

The Soviet government empowered its delegation to sign the treaty which went down in history books as the Treaty of Rapallo. The Treaty provided for re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the RSFSR and Germany and thus dealt a blow at the imperialist policy of isolating Soviet Russia. The Treaty of Rapallo signalled a collapse of the plans to create a single anti-Soviet front of the capitalist powers.[49]

The Treaty of Rapallo also signalled a break of the international isolation of Germany and contributed to restoring its international position. By signing the Treaty of Rapallo, Soviet Russia became the first state to recognise the vanquished Germany as an equal partner after the war.

Under the Treaty of Rapallo, Soviet Russia and Germany mutually renounced their claims to reparation of military expenditure and damages and the cost of the upkeep of prisoners of war. Germany renounced the claims (national and private) in connection with Soviet Russia's annulment of old debts and nationalisation of foreign property "on condition that the government of the RSFSR would not satisfy the analogous claims of other states". That provision of the Treaty broke the unity of capitalist states in their demand for restitution by the Soviet state of foreign property and repayment of debts. The Treaty of Rapallo set a model of settlement of relations between Soviet Russia and a capitalist state on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. For Germany, the Treaty of Rapallo was an important boost in the struggle against the sway of the victor powers. The USSR's renunciation of reparations undermined the positions of the recipients of reparation payments from Germany.

The Treaty of Rapallo embodied the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence and equal cooperation of states with different social orders, the two systems of ownership socialist and capitalist. This

[48] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 475.

[49] I. K. Koblyakov, *From Brest to Rapallo. Essays on Soviet-German Relations 1918-1922*, Moscow, 1954, pp. 196-209 (in Russian).

was the aspect of the Soviet-German treaty emphasised by Lenin when he wrote that "true equality of the two property systems—*if only as a temporary state, until such time as the entire world abandons* private property and the *economic chaos* and wars engendered by it for the higher property system is found only in the Treaty of Rapallo".[50] The conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo was a major triumph of Soviet foreign policy. It served to further strengthen the international stand of the Soviet country.

The signing of the Treaty of Rapallo, reported the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in 1922, "marked a turning point both in the relations between Germany and the RSFSR and in the latter's stepping on the solid ground of full diplomatic agreements with the Western powers".[51]

The Treaty offered considerable economic benefits to Germany. Its favourable results manifested themselves as early as the end of 1922. Germany's exports to the RSFSR increased from 160.2 million roubles in 1921 to 367.1 million roubles, i.e., more than doubled.[52]

The signing of the Treaty of Rapallo was welcomed by the Soviet and German peoples. It met their interests and contributed towards establishing friendly relations between them. Walter Ulbricht justly noted that "by signing the Treaty of Rapallo Dr. Wirt [Reichschancellor—*Ed.*] fulfilled the desire of the majority of the German people to establish peaceful and friendly relations with Soviet Russia".[53] The Treaty upset the plans of Western imperialists who raised hue and cry over its signing and demanded its annulment.

The Soviet government instructed its delegation to uphold the treaty with Germany and the right of the Soviet land to conclude such treaties without notifying anyone or asking anyone's permission, and also to do its utmost to defend the interests and rights of Germany. The Soviet delegation successfully fulfilled that task.

The All-Russia Central Executive Committee, in a resolution drawn up by Lenin, hailed the Treaty of Rapallo as a model for the settlement of relations between states with different social orders, as an example of peaceful cooperation between them. It instructed the Council of People's Commissars and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to follow the principles of the Treaty of Rapallo in the settlement of relations with other countries.[54]

"The Treaty of Rapallo," said Chicherin, "provides a model of

[50] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 357.

[51] *International Policy of the RSFSR in 1922*, Moscow, 1923, p. 30 (in Russian).

[52] *Trade Relations of the USSR with Capitalist Countries*, Moscow, 1938, p. 128 (in Russian).

[53] *Voprosy istorii*, No. 5, 1954, p. 60.

[54] See: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 357.

treaties we would like to conclude with all states. We have steadfastly followed and will continue to follow that road the road of promoting ever closer political and economic relations with all the nations."[55]

After the break-down of the semi-official talks at Villa Albertis and the conclusion of the Treaty of Rapallo the delegations of imperialist states were casting about for a pretext to disrupt the Conference.

Meanwhile the Soviet delegation, having studied the Report of the Experts, clearly formulated its attitude towards it. It declared in its memorandum of April 20, 1922, that the Report of the Experts contradicted the Cannes Resolution of January 6, 1922. The imperialist circles, said the Soviet document, hypocritically professed respect for the Russian people, but in fact they were trying to enslave them. The memorandum went on to suggest that normal economic links with the capitalist countries were only possible through establishment of diplomatic relations, de jure recognition of the Soviet government and renunciation of attempts to impose on Russia a "capitulation system" and encroachments on its sovereignty. It pointed out that the Soviet government was under no legal obligation to repair to foreigners the damage they had sustained as a result of the nationalisation of their property or annulment of the debts of former Russian governments. The Revolution, the memorandum said, "interrupted the continuity of obligations". Nevertheless, the Soviet government, "wishing to find grounds for agreement and restoration of business ties with foreign capital", expressed its readiness to repair the damage to foreigners provided the principle of reciprocity was observed and the foreign powers for their part repaired the damage they had inflicted on the Soviet land during their armed intervention. In this connection the Soviet memorandum officially presented to the imperialists counter-claims for damages caused by the intervention amounting to 39,000 million gold roubles.

The Soviet delegation rejected the payment of military debts of former Russian governments toppled by the people. "The Russian people," said the memorandum, "sacrificed for the sake of the Allied military interests more lives than all the other Allies combined." The Soviet government also rejected the demand to return industrial enterprises expropriated by the October Revolution. At the same time it said it was ready to give preference to former owners in leasing them off.

In their memorandum of May 2 the capitalist states by and large reiterated the demands made in the Memorandum of Experts and in some ways even toughened them. The Soviet delegation's reply came on May 11, 1922. It raised the question of foreign credits to rehabilitate and further develop Russia's economy. It rejected the obligation to pay old government debts and private claims as a prior

[55] G. V. Chicherin, op. cit., p. 289.

condition for the consideration of the question of credits.

Seeking to establish business cooperation with the capitalist countries, however, the Soviet government said it was ready to pay prewar debts on condition that the creditor states renounce their claims to the repayment of wartime debts and grant sufficient financial aid to Russia. The Soviet government instructed its delegation to explain to the Conference that the payment of prewar debts could only start in fifteen or, at the earliest, ten years and that the Soviet government was ready to take into account the interests of small holders.[56]

"The Russian government," said the reply to the Allied memorandum, "has sent its delegates to the Genoa Conference in the hope of reaching an agreement with other states which, without encroaching on the social and political regime established in Russia after the Revolution and victorious repulsion of the armed intervention, would not make more difficult, but would facilitate the economic and financial position of Russia and would simultaneously clear the road for improving the economic position of Europe.... Russia is not a vanquished state. If general agreement is to be reached the tone of negotiations should be of a kind normally used among powers talking to each other as equals".[57]

A special note should be made of the position of the US rulers before and during the Genoa Conference. The USA opposed its convocation and the very idea of peaceful settlement of relations with the Soviet state.[58] It took a negative stand on the decision of the Supreme Allied Council to invite Soviet Russia to the Conference. The Report of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 27, 1922, pointed out that the American government was the most implacable enemy of the Soviet people.[59] The former Russian Ambassador to the USA, Bakhmetiev, wrote not without malice to the former Russian Ambassador to Paris that the USA made recognition of Russia conditional on liquidation of the Bolshevik regime.[60] The US Secretary of State Hughes on March 8, 1922, rejected the invitation to attend the Conference. The USA confined itself to sending an "observer" to Genoa.

[56] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Directive of the Soviet government to Deputy Head of the RSFSR delegation at the Genoa Conference G. V. Chicherin of April 17, 1922.

[57] *Materials of the Genoa Conference*, p. 240.

[58] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, pp. 63-64.

[59] *Materials of the Genoa Conference*, p. 20.

[60] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the former Russian Ambassador to the USA, Bakhmetiev, to the former Russian Ambassador in Paris of March 11, 1922.

The reply note of Hughes, however, stated significantly that in the interests of all powers just and equal opportunities should be established for everyone to take part in the economic life of that country, i. e., Russia.[61]

The US monopolists watched the goings-on with a jaundiced eye fearful that their British and other competitors should monopolise the Russian market. At the same time the American rulers believed that if Soviet Russia capitulated and accepted the so-called principle of "equal opportunities" mentioned in Hughes' note, no imperialist country would be able to compete with the USA in the exploitation of Russia's riches, and that the USA would then be able to oust other capitalist countries from the Soviet economy and take full control of it. In the first place, American imperialists intended to seize the Caucasian oilfields, on which the capitalist monopolies of Britain, France, and other countries also had designs. The US imperialists were the fiercest opponents of the economic rehabilitation of Soviet Russia and of establishing business links with it on the basis of equality. They advocated a policy of boycott and isolation of the Soviet state.

Behind a mask of official "non-participation" the USA in fact played a very active role in the work of the Genoa Conference and contributed to disrupting it. All this activity was masterminded by the American Ambassador in Rome, Child, who attended the Conference as an "observer".

In late April 1922 Hughes published a statement which said that the USA would not tolerate any agreement that would remove the American capital from Russian oil concessions. The US representatives intended to take measures to protect American interests. On May 7 Child, in a talk with Lloyd George, declared that it was high time to postpone the Conference and to create a commission to "investigate" Russia. All that reflected the sharp struggle between the USA and Britain for the Caucasian oilfields.

Through the efforts of the French and American imperialists, and their accomplices and underlings, the Genoa Conference was disrupted. It was proclaimed suspended at the third plenary session of May 19, 1922. It was decided that on June 26 its work would be resumed by the commission convened in The Hague in order to take up the differences between the Soviet government and the governments of the Entente.

Soviet Proposals to Settle Disputed Problems at the Hague Conference

The Hague Conference was a follow-up to the Genoa Conference but was attended not by official representatives of the participating

[61] *Materials of the Genoa Conference*, p. 36.

countries but only by experts. All the countries which had been represented in Genoa, with the exception of Germany, were invited to the Hague Conference.

The US attitude towards the Hague Conference was in the main the same as to the Genoa Conference. The USA sought to torpedo the Conference reiterating the proposals, already rejected by the Soviet government, to send a commission to look into the internal situation in Russia.[62] Officially, the USA refused to attend the Conference, but its representatives actively interfered in its work as "observers", just as was the case in Genoa.

Before the Conference was opened the imperialists had agreed to form a united front. The representatives of the capitalist countries gathered ten days before the arrival of the Soviet delegation. Before meeting the latter, the so-called "Non-Russian Commission" passed a resolution forbidding individual delegations to enter into separate talks and conclude bilateral agreements with Soviet Russia.

Officially the Hague Conference opened on June 26, 1922. At the very first meeting the sub-committee for private property demanded that the RSFSR return all the nationalised foreign property or pay full compensation to the former owners. The debts sub-committee declared that Soviet Russia could only hope to obtain credits if it recognised all the debts. The credit sub-committee demanded a lifting of the state monopoly of foreign trade.

The task of the Soviet delegation at the Conference was to rebuff these extortionist demands of the capitalists. The delegation set out for The Hague resolved to uphold the gains of the October Revolution and the sovereignty of the state of workers and peasants. Just as in Genoa, the Soviet delegation was empowered to represent all the fraternal republics, to negotiate and sign agreements on their behalf. It raised the question of credits and other forms of attracting foreign investment to restore the national economy. That involved large scale agreements with all the states participating in the Conference, provided the dignity and the interests of the Soviet Republics were honoured.[63] It was important to obtain substantial credits on acceptable terms. The delegation requested 3,224 million gold roubles in credits for the following three years.[64] And it pointed out that the Soviet government intended to dispose of the credits obtained without outside interference and would use them in those branches of the

[62] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Statement of the Chairman of the Soviet delegation before departure for The Hague on the tasks and prospects of the Conference, June 1922.

[63] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Chairman of the Soviet delegation to the Chairman of the "Non-Russian Commission" Patein of July 16, 1922.

[64] *The Hague Conference. Collection of Documents*, Moscow, 1922, p. 277 (in Russian).

economy which set the pace of the general economic upsurge of the country. It also announced that most of the credits were earmarked to purchase industrial equipment from the creditor nations.

The Soviet delegation reiterated its stand that the claims of former owners for return of nationalised property were utopian and had no legal or moral grounds. In the interests of establishing business links with capitalist countries and to speed up economic rehabilitation of Soviet Russia and the other Soviet Republics, said the delegation, it was ready to satisfy the former foreign owners of nationalised enterprises by granting them concessions of their former or other enterprises.[65]

The Soviet delegation submitted a list of enterprises, mines, oilfields, forestries, etc., which could be made available as concessions. The head of the Soviet delegation, speaking on behalf of the government, explained that the granting of concessions did not indicate recognition of the rights of foreign capitalists to nationalised enterprises but was regarded "exclusively in terms of the interests of Russia and her economic revival".[66] A member of the Soviet delegation, Krasin, said that the capitalists would do well to understand once and for all that "there could on no account be any talk of restoration of the rights of former owners. The Soviet Government would never do that".[67]

Soviet Russia was ready, provided the imperialists dropped their demands for repayment of war debts, to drop its counter-claims for damages caused by the armed intervention. And it was reiterated that, given favourable terms of credits, Soviet Russia would recognise the prewar state debts less the interest that had accrued since the debts were made.[68]

After the Genoa Conference the capitalists still harboured hopes of retrieving nationalised property. But the Hague Conference convinced them that their plans were illusory, and the fate of the Conference became a foregone conclusion.

The refusal of the capitalist powers to enter into normal business cooperation with Soviet Russia deadlocked the Hague Conference by the middle of July, 1922, to which, as in Genoa, the US actions contributed a great deal. The American "observers" had been instructed by the Secretary of State Hughes to prevent an agreement between Soviet Russia and the capitalist states of Europe. With rumours circulating about attempts to organise an international consortium, presided over by Britain, to exploit Russia's oil resources, the US government decided to speed up disruption of the Hague Conference.

[65] Ibid., p. 41.

[66] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, p. 481.

[67] Ibid., p. 493.

[68] Ibid., pp. 515-16.

The reactionary circles of France and Belgium rendered it considerable assistance in that.[69]

On July 19, 1922, the "Non-Russian Commission" met for its final session. It adopted a resolution which said that even such concessions on the part of Soviet Russia as recognition of the prewar debts, a commitment to pay compensation to former foreign owners and Russia's consent not to discuss at the Conference the question of granting government and government-guaranteed credits to Soviet Russia and of Soviet counter-claims would not provide a sufficient base for concluding a general agreement with Russia. It was clear that some participants of the "Non-Russian Commission", who were most interested in extending the financial and economic blockade of Russia, sought to wreck the Conference as soon as possible, fearing that a single anti-Soviet front would be split if the Conference went on. They succeeded in disrupting it. On July 20, 1922, after the Conference had closed, the "Non-Russian Commission" met to adopt a resolution, tabled by the Belgian representative Cattier, which recommended to all the governments participating in the Conference and all other powers not to support "their subjects in their attempts to acquire property in Russia earlier owned by foreign subjects and confiscated after November 1, 1917, without the agreement of their foreign owners or leaseholders".[70] That resolution ruled out any possibility of bilateral agreements.

The methods used by capitalist businessmen will readily be seen from the fact that a major British capitalist, Urquhart, who was a member of the British delegation and voted for the resolution, agreed with Krasin soon after the Hague Conference broke up, on September 9, 1922, on the terms of a concession in the Urals and on the Lena gold mines which Urquhart owned before the Revolution.

Lenin opposed the agreement with Urquhart, stressing that it was economically very unfavourable and dangerous for the RSFSR. "I suggest that the concession should be *rejected*," wrote Lenin. "It is bondage and plunder."[71]

In accordance with Lenin's instructions, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR in its Decree of October 6, 1922, declined a concession treaty "because the actions of Britain clearly indicate absence of friendly, stable, and settled relations between the Soviet Republic and the government of the country where the centre of the Russian-Asiatic Consolidated Company is situated".[72]

[69] Ibid., p. 506.

[70] Ibid., pp. 752-53.

[71] *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*, p. 495.

[72] The company referred to was headed by Urquhart (*International Politics of the RSFSR in 1922*, Moscow, 1923, p. 27, in Russian).

The Moscow Conference on the Limitation of Armaments

As soon as the Civil War was over, Soviet Russia set about to unilaterally cut its armed forces bringing them down to 800,000 by the mid-1922, i.e., a sixfold cut.

After the Soviet proposals on disarmament were declined by the bourgeois states at the Genoa Conference, the Soviet government took new steps to limit armed forces and armaments.

On June 12, 1922, the government of the RSFSR appealed to the governments of Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland proposing a conference in Moscow with the participation of these countries to discuss arms reductions.[73] It viewed the Moscow Conference as a first step towards universal disarmament hoping that the number of participants in the negotiations and in the agreement could subsequently be enlarged. An invitation went out to Romania a little later.

The Soviet proposal, however, was fiercely resisted, as Poland and the other border states did not want to disarm. The Latvian Mission to Poland reported to the Latvian Foreign Ministry on June 20, 1922, that Pilsudski's policy consisted in behaving "aggressively" with regard to the Bolsheviks.[74]

The Estonian government, on June 20, 1922, proposed a conference of the Foreign Ministers and military experts of Poland and the Baltic countries to agree on a common stand concerning the Soviet proposal.[75] On August 1-3 Tallinn became the venue of a conference of military representatives of Poland, Finland, Latvia, and Estonia to work out a common line. A similar meeting, this time also with Romania's participation, was held in Warsaw in the latter half of September 1922. The final protocol of the meeting read in part: "Whatever the proposals which will undoubtedly be presented at the forthcoming conference by the Russian representatives, they would undoubtedly envisage considerable reduction of the armed forces of Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Poland and Romania. Such proposals should be recognised as unacceptable in advance."[76] Romania made her participation conditional on recognition of its seizure of Bessarabia, which was, of course, rejected.

The Chief of Staff of the Latvian Army, General Penikis, said that Latvia could not demobilise a single soldier.[77]

[73] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. V, p. 448.

[74] CSHA of the Latvian SSR. Report of the Latvian Chargé d'Affaires in Poland, Ratzen, to the Latvian Foreign Ministry of June 20, 1922.

[75] CSHA of the Latvian SSR. Report of the Latvian Envoy to Estonia J. Seskis to the Latvian Foreign Ministry of June 20, 1922.

[76] CSHA of the Latvian SSR. Final protocol adopted at the session of September 23, 1922.

[77] *Izvestia*, December 6, 1922.

The Moscow Conference was held on December 2-12, 1922. The Soviet delegation submitted a plan based on the principle of mutual and proportionate reduction of ground forces, their scaling down to one-fourth of their strength, i.e., by 75 per cent, within the next eighteen to twenty-four months. It also proposed a cut in military spending by fixing a certain budgetary figure of expenditure per one serviceman for all the contracting parties,[78] and to mutually neutralise the border zone and disband all the paramilitary units.

While sidestepping the discussions of the concrete proposals of the Soviet government on actual arms cuts, the representatives of Poland, Finland, Latvia, and Estonia engaged in talk about "moral disarmament", about the need to first create an atmosphere of trust among the participants in the talks. To sidetrack the negotiations away from the main question of disarmament, they submitted their own draft of a pact on non-aggression and arbitrage.[79] While the Soviet delegation did not object to a non-aggression pact, it insisted on reducing armaments by at least 25 per cent.

In the course of the Conference all the delegations agreed in principle with Soviet Russia's proposal of a 25-per cent cut of the armed forces of the states participating in the Conference (and not by 75 per cent as originally proposed by the Soviet government). Poland, however, refused to undertake any commitments.[80] Moreover, the delegations of Poland, Finland, Latvia, and Estonia were caught out presenting exaggerated figures of their armed forces, so that the proposed cuts would not in fact have led to their reduction.

After their bluff had been called by the Soviet delegation, the representatives of Poland, Finland, Latvia, and Estonia made an open effort to disrupt the Conference by presenting an ultimatum on December 11 in which they proclaimed unacceptable the solution of mutual disarmament question through proportionate reduction of armies as proposed by the Soviet delegation.[81]

Thus, despite the efforts of Soviet Russia, whose government did everything to make the Conference a success, the governments of the Polish-Baltic bloc, yielding to the pressure of the major imperialist powers, disrupted the Moscow Conference.

The Tenth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which met in late December 1922, pointed out in its appeal to all the peoples of the world of December 27, 1922:

"In Genoa, Soviet Russia and its allies proposed universal disarmament and, when it was rejected, the government of the proletariat attempted to pursue the policy of disarmament, at least in the limited

[78] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VI, Moscow, 1962, pp. 24-25.
[79] Ibid., pp. 50-53.
[80] Ibid., p. 58.
[81] Ibid., pp. 58, 65, 66.

sphere of Soviet Russia's adjacent states and to gradually enlarge the number of disarming states. Yet that initiative, too, was disrupted by the reluctance of Russia's neighbours to carry out real reduction of their armies.

"Regardless of everything, Soviet Russia itself began disarming and within a short space of time reduced its army from 5 million to 800,000 and is now continuing reductions to bring its army to 600,000. It has proved in deed its commitment to the cause of peace. Not in words, not in resolutions, not in pledges, but in deed."[82]

Although the Moscow Conference failed to yield positive results because of the intrigues of the bourgeois states, the Soviet diplomatic activity there had not been in vain. The Conference went a long way to promote the ideas of peace and attract the attention of the popular masses to the problem of disarmament. The very fact that the first disarmament conference in international history was called in the capital of a socialist state was highly significant.

The Lausanne Conference

The Soviet country had not only upheld by force of arms and at negotiation table its right to independent development, but also rendered considerable help to the peoples of the East in their struggle for independence.[83] Among them was the Turkish people who in 1922 were in the midst of a fierce war against the Greek interventionists who were backed by the British imperialists.

The defeat of the Greek army made the Entente powers agree to have negotiations with Turkey. They convened a peace conference in Lausanne hoping to attend to the settling of the Near East problems, including the question of the Black Sea Straits in order to preserve as far as possible and to strengthen their weakened positions in the Near and Middle East. In order to isolate Turkey and weaken its position the "host powers" (Britain, France, and Italy) decided to hold the conference without Soviet Russia.

In its notes of September 12 and 24, 1922, the Soviet government vigorously objected to the non-Black Sea powers usurping the right to regulate the regime of the Straits without Russia's participation and against its interests and exposed the aggressive nature of the plans of British imperialism. The Soviet government declared that it would not recognise any decisions of the Conference adopted without its participation.

The protest of the Soviet government forced the "host powers" to abandon their initial plan and to admit the Soviet delegation to the

[82] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VI, p. 115.
[83] See Chapter V.

Conference, but only to those sessions which were to discuss the questions of the Straits. The demand of the Soviet government that the delegations of the Ukraine and Georgia should be invited along with that of the RSFSR, and that the Soviet delegation should be allowed to attend the Conference from beginning to end was rejected. The Soviet government nevertheless decided to take part in the Conference in order to uphold the rights of the Soviet land as a Black Sea power and to expose the imperialist policies of the Western powers. Representatives from the Ukraine and Georgia were included in the RSFSR delegation.

The Soviet delegation at the Conference proposed a programme developed by Lenin. It consisted of three points:

1. The satisfaction of Turkey's national aspirations.
2. The closing of the Straits to all warships in times of peace and of war.
3. Complete freedom of commerce by sea.[84]

The Conference opened on November 20, 1922. It was attended by Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Turkey, and a US "observer". The discussion of certain questions was attended also by Soviet Russia, Bulgaria, Albania, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Norway, and Sweden.

On December 4, 1922, the head of the Soviet delegation, Chicherin, read out the Soviet government's declaration at the meeting of the commission on the Straits. It said that the Soviet delegation, in the solution of questions in whose discussion it would take part, would adhere to two basic principles: 1) the equality of Russia and its allies with other powers; 2) the preservation of peace and security of the territories of Russia and its allied republics, and freedom of their economic relations with other countries.[85]

The British draft, presented by Curzon and supported by France and Italy, envisaged free passage through the Straits of naval vessels of any country both in peacetime and in wartime. Britain, moreover, proposed a demilitarisation of the coasts of the Straits and handing over of control over them to an international commission that would include not only Black Sea powers but also those far removed from the Black Sea. The adoption of the British draft would have created a permanent threat to the Black Sea coast of the Soviet Union as well as to those of all the other Black Sea states. It would have meant violation of Turkey's state sovereignty.

While not formally participating in the conference, the representatives of the USA were very active behind the scenes: they supported the British proposals and sought the adoption of the principle of the "free passage" to the Black Sea in order to be able to move in US

[84] See: V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 385-86.

[85] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VI, p. 36.

battleships there. Seeking to create favourable conditions for aggressive actions against the Soviet state from the south, the US rulers at the same time objected to Britain's attempts to establish its supremacy in the Straits zone under the pretext of international control.

On December 19, 1922, the Soviet delegation came out against Curzon's plan describing it as an obstacle to peace in the Near East and in the whole world. It proposed its own draft "Rules of Passage of Vessels Through the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus". The Soviet draft demanded complete freedom of passage through the Straits for merchant vessels and for commercial aviation of any power but at the same time demanded a closure of the Straits for the naval vessels and military aviation of all states except Turkey. The draft provided for the right of the Turkish government in exceptional cases to allow the passage of light battleships, but not for military purposes. The Soviet delegation insisted on drawing up and adoption within three months of an international act recognising the Black Sea as a closed sea of littoral states.[86]

Turkey, which stood committed to consider the question of the Straits as a matter for the Black Sea powers under the agreement with Soviet Russia of 1921 and the agreements with the Ukraine and Georgia, went back on these commitments and agreed to the British draft convention on the Straits. The Turkish delegation started separate talks on the basis of the Curzon terms hoping to gain concessions from Britain on other points of the peace treaty. That predetermined the results of the work of the Straits commission. Curzon declared that the Soviet draft was unacceptable and suggested that his draft should be referred for agreement to a committee of experts from which a Soviet representative was barred.

The Soviet delegation nevertheless continued to struggle for a just settlement of the Straits issue. In doing so, it defended the interests not only of its own state but of all the Black Sea states.

In its three additional notes of January 7, 13, and 20, 1923, the Soviet delegation protested against the separate conference of Western delegations and Turkey. Chicherin in his speeches on February 1, 1923, argued convincingly that the draft convention on the Straits regime drawn up in the spirit of the Curzon demands was unacceptable for the Soviet country.[87]

For a number of reasons, chief of which was to get rid of the Soviet delegation, Curzon succeeded in having the Conference suspended.

The Soviet delegation was not admitted to the second stage of the Lausanne negotiations, which began on April 23, 1923, under the pretext that the question of the Straits was not on the agenda. When the Soviet Ambassador to Italy, Vorovsky, arrived in Lausanne as a

[86] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VI, pp. 92-96.

[87] Ibid., pp. 173-78.

member of the Soviet delegation, the sponsors of the Conference stripped him of his diplomatic privileges and rights fearing that he would make fresh exposures of their aggressive policies. A campaign of baiting was started against Vorovsky which culminated in his murder on May 10, 1923.

At the final session of the Lausanne Conference on July 24, 1923, the Allied powers and Turkey signed a peace agreement and a convention on the Straits regime based on the Curzon draft. True, the tonnage of battleships of the non-Black Sea states which were allowed to pass through the Straits was limited. In reply to a query of the Conference's Secretary as to whether the USSR was ready to sign the convention on the Straits, the Soviet government restated its objections and protested against the violation of the rights of the Turkish people but said that in the interests of promoting peace it would sign the convention. "... If the practice of the application of the Convention reveals that it does not offer sufficient guarantee of the trade and security interests of the Soviet Republics, they would have to raise the question of annulling it."[88]

The Lausanne convention was signed in Rome on August 14, 1923. The USSR did not ratify the Lausanne convention as violating its legitimate rights and failing to guarantee peace and security for the Black Sea countries.

At the Lausanne Conference the Land of Soviets was again seen by the whole world, especially the oppressed peoples of the East, as a consistent and firm champion of their interests and dedicated advocate of universal peace. The Soviet government's participation in the Lausanne Conference also meant support for Turkey in its struggle for independence.

"The Curzon Ultimatum"

The Lausanne Conference saw the British imperialists launch an offensive against the USSR. The most active proponent of the anti-Soviet policy was Curzon. The British imperialists hoped to deal a decisive blow at the Soviet land in order to stop its growing influence in the countries of the East.

In late 1922-early 1923, British diplomacy undertook a series of hostile acts against the Soviet Union on Curzon's initiative. The British government went as far as interfering in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. For instance, the British protested against alleged religious persecutions in the USSR. These British moves were aimed at unleashing an anti-Soviet propaganda, uniting the reactionary forces of the capitalist countries, and preparing the ground for

[88] Ibid., p. 392.

a showdown with the USSR.

On May 8, 1923, the official British representative in Moscow, Sir Robert Hodgson, handed to Litvinov a large memorandum which has gone down in history as the "Curzon ultimatum". It put forward various ungrounded accusations and ultimatums, such as the demands to end anti-British propaganda in Iran and Afghanistan allegedly conducted there by Soviet representatives, and their recall, renunciation of the Soviet government's reply notes concerning religious "persecutions", the freeing of British trawlers detained in Soviet territorial waters for illegal fishing and compensation to their owners, and so on. Curzon sought to represent the USSR as a breaker of international norms which had put itself beyond the pale of the "civilised nations". He refused in advance to take part in any discussions of the British claims and threatened to break off all relations unless the demands of the British government were met within ten days.[89]

The aim of the "Curzon ultimatum" was to intimidate the USSR into concessions, to undermine its prestige in the countries of the East, to isolate the USSR from neighbouring Asian countries thus delaying for a long period the development of its economic and political relations with Iran and Afghanistan, and, with luck, to provoke a war of the capitalist states against the Soviet Union.

The "Curzon ultimatum" created a very difficult situation for the USSR. The British Conservatives, according to the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain, were "setting the dogs of reaction loose in Europe to provoke a war on Russia".[90] The bourgeois press in various countries picked up and started to build up an anti-Soviet campaign.

The international reactionaries, however, grossly miscalculated because they had underestimated the strength of the Soviet state. The working people of the USSR wrathfully rejected an attempt to talk to them in the language of ultimatums and threats. The whole of the Soviet Union was swept by angry demonstrations of protest.

Soviet diplomacy administered a fitting rebuff to Curzon exposing the true aims of the ultimatum before the nations. The Soviet reply Note of May 11, 1923, pointed out that "a break of relations would be fraught with new dangers and complications posing a threat to peace". The Note resolutely rejected the ultimatums and threats as means to settle misunderstandings between states in general and of establishing normal relations with the Soviet Republics in particular. The Soviet government in its reply rejected the attempt of the British imperialists to impose their will on the USSR and to demand that the latter abandon its independent policy. The Soviet Note exposed the

[89] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VI, pp. 297-302.

[90] *The Worker's Weekly*, May 12, 1923.

falsehood of Curzon's allegations concerning anti-British propaganda allegedly conducted by Soviet representatives. Finally, the note said that one of the causes of recurrent misunderstandings between the Soviet Union and Britain was the fact that certain British circles did not want to deal with other countries on the basis of equality.

At the same time the Soviet government in its reply indicated its desire to settle disputed questions peacefully. It made considerable concessions and suggested a conference to discuss the whole range of Soviet-British relations.[91]

The British government realised that the Soviet state was not to be intimidated by threats. Therefore it used the opportunity "to save face" which the Soviet reply Note discreetly offered to it by suggesting talks on disputed problems. The British government felt it had to give in, and in June 1923 the two sides declared that they considered the conflict to be closed. The British Conservatives thus failed to undermine the authority of the USSR in the eyes of the peoples of the East.

* * *

The Genoa and the Hague conferences saw the imperialist powers try to settle relations with Soviet Russia on crippling terms and saddle it with a semi-colonial regime. These plans were a dismal failure. The imperialists failed to bring the Soviet state to abandon its monopoly of foreign trade, or to return nationalised foreign property to the former owners or to recognise the debts of the tsarist and Provisional governments, not to speak of any commitments that would impinge upon the sovereignty of the Soviet state.

The Soviet Union once more demonstrated that it was not to be talked to in the language of diktat and threats, and that it was in the interests of capitalist countries themselves to establish diplomatic relations and extensive trade links with the Soviet Union on the basis of complete equality.

At the same time the foreign policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet government frustrated the attempts to create a united front of imperialist powers. Already at the Genoa Conference, the USSR concluded a treaty with Germany, based on equality and mutual benefit.

At the Genoa and Hague conferences Soviet Russia, however, failed to achieve normal relations with capitalist countries, an acceptable settlement of disputed questions or to conclude trade agreements and obtain credits. The capitalists believed that their policy would make it impossible for the Soviet land to restore its economy, and would break its will and help force on it inequitable terms and

[91] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VI, pp. 288-96.

colonial bondage.

Their calculations, however, proved wrong. Needless to say, the imperialists' refusal of credits and of wide-scale economic cooperation on the basis of equality created enormous additional difficulties for the Soviet people. But the Soviet people, by exerting great efforts to overcome these daunting problems, succeeded in restoring and developing the economy relying on their internal resources. That was made possible by the dictatorship of the proletariat and the advantages of the socialist order.

The 12th All-Russia Conference of the RCP (B) held in August 1922 declared in its resolution on the report on the international policy that it "approves the line pursued by the CC in foreign policy and expresses satisfaction with the position of the delegations of the RSFSR in Genoa and The Hague". The resolution went on to say that "in connection with the outcome of the Genoa and the Hague conferences, the present conference draws the attention of all the members of the Party to the need to concentrate all efforts and energy on strengthening the national economy, on providing for the working people in general and the working class in particular and on maintaining the defence potential of the RSFSR at the required level".[92]

The Soviet government, despite the obstacles which emerged during the Genoa and Hague conferences, continued to steadfastly work to promote business cooperation with the capitalist countries. It proceeded on the basis that such cooperation was necessary not only for Soviet Russia but for the capitalist states as well. "The fact of the matter is that the most urgent, pressing and practical interests that have been sharply revealed in all the capitalist countries during the past few years call for the development, regulation and expansion of trade with Russia,"[93] said Lenin.

The First All-Union Congress of Soviets held in Moscow on December 30, 1922, adopted a Treaty forming a voluntary union of equal Soviet Republics, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Lenin and the Communist Party were the guiding spirits and organisers of the state unity of the peoples of the USSR.

The historic significance of the formation of the USSR was revealed in detail in the resolution of the CC CPSU on the preparation to mark the 50th anniversary of that event. "In its political significance and socio-economic consequences the formation of the USSR," stressed that document, "occupies an outstanding place in the history of the Soviet state."[94] The creation of the Soviet Union rallied the peoples of all the Soviet Republics still closer for fraternal coopera-

[92] *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, p. 397.
[93] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 265.
[94] *Kommunist*, No. 3, 1972, p. 4.

tion and mutual assistance in the building of socialism, for further joint strengthening of the country's defences, for pursuing a concerted foreign policy in relations with the capitalist states, in the struggle for peace and security. It strengthened the Soviet country, enhanced its economic, political, and military might, and gave it greater opportunities for exerting a more active influence on the international relations as a whole.

CHAPTER VII

RECOGNITION OF THE SOVIET UNION BY CAPITALIST COUNTRIES (1924-1925)

Britain Recognises the USSR

1924 went down in the history of Soviet foreign policy as the year of recognition of the Soviet Union by bourgeois states. By that time the Soviet people had scored considerable success in rehabilitating the economy. The 13th Congress of the RCP (B), which met in May 1924, noted the strong economic upsurge in the country and the strengthening of socialist positions in the national economy.

There were a number of reasons that prompted the Western countries to at last extend de jure recognition to the Soviet Union. These included the failure of the attempt to destroy the Soviet Union by military force, the economic progress made following the adoption of the New Economic Policy, the growth of the USSR's prestige in the world, business circles' interest in developing economic ties, and the mounting popularity of the Soviet socialist state among the working class of the capitalist countries as well as all the oppressed peoples.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and capitalist countries was not merely a mechanical recognition of the Soviet government by foreign states. The Soviet government saw this recognition as the first step in the development of the USSR's political relations. Soviet diplomacy sought to establish the country's normal relations with all capitalist countries. But, of course, only on a mutually advantageous basis and an equal footing.

The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs G. V. Chicherin spelled out this principle in a letter to the Soviet Ambassador in Rome on October 12, 1923. He pointed out that "since we have to maintain friendly relations with countries having a different social and economic system and other parties at the heads of governments, we shall base these friendly relations on real interests, trade or otherwise. That will not change in any way our own social and political system, nor that of the other side.... Nor does such action contradict either our programme or our views. We shall keep within the confines of the practical realities that require us to have good relations with the capitalist governments".[1]

[1] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR G. V. Chicherin to the Soviet Ambassador in Rome, October 12, 1923.

Chicherin made the point that recognition of the Soviet Union was a necessity both for the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries themselves, since it facilitated their economic relations. He also pointed out that de jure recognition "is essential not only for us but also for the other side, so MacDonald and others in Britain, who could possibly come to power tomorrow, are deluding themselves if they think that they would be doing us an honour by extending de jure recognition. Nothing of the sort! They need de jure recognition just as much as we do.... Indeed, why else was there such warm response at election meetings in Britain to any mention of recognition for the Soviet Republic? Simply because they know and they feel that Britain itself needs our market, needs our raw materials".[2]

What prompted Britain, first and foremost, to take steps to normalise relations with the Soviet Union was its economic situation, which was continuing to deteriorate. Following the signing of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement in 1921, trade between the two countries expanded considerably. However, its volume was far from reaching the prewar level, although the Soviet Union could have traded with Britain on a greater scale than tsarist Russia.

At that time Britain imported from the USSR chiefly timber, grain and other commodities it needed badly and which it usually bought abroad. To the Soviet Union Britain sold machines, equipment, non-ferrous metals, chemicals and rubber, i.e., its traditional export goods. The establishment of diplomatic relations quite naturally would have considerably improved the conditions for promoting economic ties and for expanding them.

At the same time the normalisation of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union strengthened Britain's foreign policy status in Europe.

On January 22, 1924, the first Labour government in Britain's history came to office. It was headed by Ramsay MacDonald, who also took charge of the Foreign Office. As Prime Minister of a Labour government, he had to reckon with the mood of the working class. He was also aware that the absence of normal relations with the Soviet Union hindered the development of economic ties. In its election manifesto the Labour Party had called for the normalisation of relations with the USSR, and this slogan was highly popular among the working class. The election manifesto stated explicitly that the Labour Party favoured the resumption of broad economic and diplomatic relations with Russia.[3] Liberal leaders also made similar statements, counting on winning them more votes.

Even among part of the bourgeoisie in Britain, the sentiments in favour of restoring relations and developing trade with the USSR were growing stronger. In the summer of 1923 a delegation of British

[2] G. V. Chicherin, op. cit., pp. 273-74.
[3] *Daily Herald*, November 19, 1923.

industrialists headed by the Conservative Party leader Stanley Baldwin visited the Soviet Union. It included some of the top British manufacturers. On the delegation's return home, it urged that credits be made available to the Soviet Union and that Anglo-Soviet trade be expanded. In its annual report for 1924 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs stated: "By the end of 1923 the call for recognition of the USSR was so popular in Britain that even some of the Conservative press organs ... came out in favour of the restoration of normal relations with us."[4]

Numerous difficulties, however, still stood in the way of an improvement in Soviet-British relations. For one thing, the British government sought to impose certain preconditions on the Soviet Union. MacDonald insisted on preliminary talks in the course of which he hoped to obtain in exchange for recognition of the Soviet Union its consent to repay the debts of the tsarist and Provisional governments. This is evident from MacDonald's letter to Grenfell of January 3, 1924, that was subsequently forwarded to the Soviet government. He writes that recognition would be granted "under no conditions". Yet at the same time he suggests that certain promises be obtained from the Soviet government on future concessions to Britain. "If, for instance," he writes, "after recognition there is to be no settlement of outstanding things, it would count very heavily against the Labour Government." In this connection he asks for elucidation of a number of points. "What," he asks, "is in Moscow's mind regarding the employment of British capital either in the form of concessions, timber, mineral, etc—or investment, railways, etc? Has this been worked out? Would such draft agreements as that in existence regarding Urquhart be taken up and accepted by Moscow in the event of recognition? How soon does Moscow think the claims of private persons against it could be settled?"[5]

In connection with this letter, the official Soviet representative in Great Britain reported back to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on January 5, 1924: "Our formula: recognition without pre-conditions has in itself been accepted only in part. The person in question [i. e., MacDonald—*Ed.*] accepts our view that recognition should be unconditional..., and also that it should be immediate. But ... in order to be able to ward off the expected attacks of his political opponents, he would like to have in reserve a document with a favourable reply to the questions put in his letter of January 3."[6]

[4] *Annual Report of People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs for 1924 to the Third Congress of Soviets*, Moscow, 1925, p. 6.

[5] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from Ramsay MacDonald to Grenfell, January 3, 1924.

[6] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Message of the Soviet Representative in London to the Deputy People's Commissar, January 5, 1924.

On instructions from the People's Commissariat, the Soviet representative informed MacDonald of the Soviet government's readiness to negotiate a settlement of disputed issues with Britain.[7]

But in his letter to the Soviet representative of January 12, 1924, MacDonald again insisted that recognition of the USSR should depend on the Soviet government's preliminary agreement to settle outstanding issues (first and foremost, the question of debts).[8] The Soviet government, however, turned down this demand as smacking of blackmail.

The delay in extending recognition to the USSR brought an immediate reaction from the British working class. A meeting was held in London to protest against this delay. Numerous letters of protest against the MacDonald government's policy were sent to the editor of the Labour *Daily Herald*. Summing up the letters, the paper noted on January 29, 1924 that there was a certain impatience among the working class over the expected recognition of the Soviet government. On January 29, 1924, London workers sent a deputation to the government demanding the immediate recognition of the USSR. As the magazine *Labour Monthly* was to point out in January, recognition was extended, but only under pressure from the masses.

The MacDonald government was anything but anxious to start its term of office with a conflict with the workers who had brought it to power.

On instructions from London, the official British representative in Moscow Sir Robert Hodgson sent the Soviet government a Note on February 2, 1924, informing it of Britain's recognition of the USSR. He also pointed out that in order to create normal conditions for establishing full friendly and commercial relations it would be essential to conclude practical agreements on a number of issues.[9] The British government also stipulated that it recognised the Soviet government as the de jure government on those territories of the former Russian Empire which recognised its authority.[10] This formula revealed that the British government had not given up hope of other governments, apart from the Soviet government, appearing on the territory of the former Russian Empire which could be recognised by Britain.

The British government suggested signing an agreement confirming the validity of the treaties concluded between Russia and Britain before the October Revolution. It stemmed from the premise that recognition of the Soviet government "automatically brought into force all the treaties concluded between the two countries before the

[7] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, Moscow, 1963, p. 27.
[8] Ibid., p. 33.
[9] Ibid., p. 53.
[10] Ibid.

Russian Revolution, except for those no longer legally effective".[11] The purpose of this proviso was to restore all the obligations of the tsarist and Provisional governments in regard to Britain that had been annulled by the Soviet government.

In its reply the Soviet government stressed that friendly cooperation between the peoples of Great Britain and the Soviet Union was one of its primary concerns, and noted with satisfaction that "the British Government had recognised de jure the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, whose authority extended over all the territories of the former Russian Empire, with the exception of territories that had seceded with the consent of the Soviet Government and had formed independent states".[12]

This formula was fully in keeping with the interests of the USSR and safeguarded its sovereignty and independence. In accepting this formula, Britain was compelled to recognise the sovereignty of the Soviet government over the entire territory of the USSR, as well as over those territories the seizure of which had not been recognised by the Soviet Union, Bessarabia being a case in point. The Soviet government also declared its readiness to discuss and settle in a friendly manner all matters that stemmed directly or indirectly from the issue of recognition. It expressed readiness "to reach agreement with the British government on the replacement of the old treaties".[13]

On February 2, 1924, the Second All-Union Congress of Soviets passed a resolution describing Britain's recognition of the USSR as the outcome of the combined efforts of the peaceful policy of the Soviet government under the leadership of Lenin and the loudly expressed determination of the British people. This recognition, the resolution went on to say, was performed in a manner worthy of the great peoples of the two countries, and one which laid the foundation for their friendly cooperation.

Simultaneously with the official exchange of notes on the establishment of diplomatic relations, MacDonald and Chicherin exchanged private letters. In his letter of February 1, 1924, MacDonald suggested that there should be an exchange of chargé d'affaires, not ambassadors. He believed ambassadors could be appointed after the main agreement had been reached.[14]

Chicherin sent MacDonald a letter on February 13, 1924, with congratulations on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Britain and best wishes for success in his work. Chicherin also underlined the Soviet desire for peace and friendly cooperation with Britain. He expressed surprise over the proposal for an

[11] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 53.
[12] Ibid., p. 54.
[13] Ibid., pp. 54-55.
[14] Ibid., p. 99.

exchange of ambassadors only after the settlement of disputed issues.[15] Chicherin pointed out that such a postponement "would be interpreted as a sign of backstage manoeuvres and thus give rise to endless suspicion and rumours. For instance, it would immediately be suspected that the British government was trying to put pressure on us. That would create an extremely unfavourable impression, as our peoples know well that nothing can be gained by pressuring us". In conclusion Chicherin urged the MacDonald government to refrain from putting obstacles in the way of the development of Soviet-British relations: "Let us move ahead," he urged, "and let our motto be mutual reconciliation."[16] The British government, however, turned a deaf ear to the Soviet proposals and for a long time the two countries were represented by chargés d'affaires.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Britain was of very great political and economic significance. It met with the approval of the British working people and part of the British bourgeoisie. Reporting to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on the reaction in Britain, the Soviet Ambassador in London wrote on February 15, 1924: "It can be stated definitely that the Labour government's recognition of the Soviet Union has not aroused any serious criticism. Only Curzon described it as the 'biggest mistake in the world.' Although Baldwin also expressed some misgivings and put some questions to MacDonald in connection with the recognition, his speech [Baldwin's speech in the House of Commons—*Ed.*] was by no means aggressive towards the Soviet Union. Lord Gray in the House of Lords and Asquith in the Commons gave unconditional approval of the recognition. What happened could well have been foreseen. After recognition was extended, everyone, or practically everyone, professed to support the action."[17]

The normalisation of Soviet-British diplomatic relations was a major success for the peaceful foreign policy of the USSR, which had won recognition from a big European capitalist country.

The Further Development of Relations Between Britain and the USSR

Recognition in itself did not, however, mean an automatic improvement in the political and economic relations between Britain and the USSR. For that to happen it was necessary to resolve a number of complicated outstanding issues and put trade relations on a more solid legal foundation. That was the purpose of the Anglo-Soviet Confer-

[15] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[16] Ibid., p. 99.

[17] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in London to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, February 15, 1924.

ence that took place in London from April 14 to August 12, 1924.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government attached great significance to the Conference, well aware that its favourable outcome would effect not only better relations with Britain, but would tend to improve the entire international situation in Europe. The goals of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations were discussed at the plenary meeting of the CC RCP (B) at the end of March and beginning of April, 1924, and the decisions of the Politburo were approved.

Taking into account the importance of the coming negotiations, the Soviet government despatched a delegation to London, that was not only with full powers, but was made up of people with considerable political prestige. It included members of the CC and the Presidium of the CEC, as well as representatives from a number of people's commissariats, top officials of the State Bank, representatives from some of the republics, and also from the most important industries and the central Committees of some of the trade unions.

At the first meeting of the Conference, the leaders of the delegations stated the positions of their governments. The Soviet delegate declared that apart from political and economic matters concerning relations between the two countries, the Soviet government would bring up for discussion important international political problems, such as the universal reduction of armaments, the widening of international cooperation, the revision of the Versailles Treaty and other treaties connected with it.

The Soviet delegation's statement noted with deep regret that despite the peace treaties signed after the world war, social and national antagonism had never been so acute. "Both during the world war and after it ended it was said that this would be the last war and it would put an end to the development of militarism. These hopes have proved an illusion. Now, too, the military budgets are swallowing a substantial slice of the national income, and the attention of all governments is directed primarily at military preparations. Never before has the human brain been at such pains to seek new destructive means. All well-informed people agree that a new war, should it break loose, would be the most destructive war that mankind has ever known in its history, because of the advances of military chemistry, military aviation, military shipping and the modernisation of the artillery. In view of that, we believe that governments should face up the problem of disarmament clearly and categorically. Disarmament should be taken to lowest conceivable limits."[18]

The Soviet representative revealed that between 1921 and 1924 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had reduced its army by 92 per cent bringing it down from 6 million to 500,000 men. He also stressed that should the other countries agree, the Soviet Union was

[18] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 197.

prepared to make further decisive steps in disarmament, and in addition it would promote in every way a general cutback in naval armaments".[19]

"We believe," the Soviet delegate declared in conclusion, "that differences in the social structure of our countries cannot serve as an obstacle to their political and economic cooperation."[20]

The Soviet side announced its readiness to resolve disputed issues that were hindering close Anglo-Soviet cooperation. These included the matter of prewar debts, other mutual claims and the question of credits.

The British representatives in their statements made a number of demands to the Soviet side, for the most part unacceptable ones. Thus, Britain insisted that the Soviet Union recognise all debts; satisfy the claims of British holders of Russian securities and the ex-owners of property held by foreigners that had been nationalised; restore the operation of the former treaties existing between Russia and Britain; and replace the Trade Treaty of 1921 with a commercial agreement. It was also demanded that anti-British propaganda be stopped.[21]

It was, therefore, hardly surprising that the talks dragged on and failed to produce positive results. The Soviet government announced that a partial repayment of debts would be possible only if it were to receive a loan the greater part of which would be used to buy British goods, and, consequently, to expand Anglo-Soviet trade.[22] But the British side continued to insist on an unconditional recognition of all old debts and refused to accept the Soviet suggestion that the government guarantee the proposed loan to the Soviet Union.

On August 4, the Conference reached an impasse. The long hours of discussion and bitter arguments produced no agreement. In the form of an ultimatum the British delegation demanded that the Soviet government satisfy all claims of British nationals whose property had been nationalised in Soviet Russia. The Soviet side was prepared to agree to recognising well-founded claims that had been accepted by the Soviet government.[23] The British representative replied to this by announcing that "the talks and all agreements had come to nothing".[24]

The failure of the talks upset the British workers and they insisted on measures to ensure the successful conclusion of the Conference. Work stopped at many factories in London. The House of Commons

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., p. 199.

[21] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Verbatim Record of the Proceedings of the Anglo-Soviet Conference.

[22] *Pravda*, April 30, 1924.

[23] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Verbatim Record of the Proceedings of the Anglo-Soviet Conference.

[24] Ibid.

debated the question of the Anglo-Soviet treaties. A meeting of the Executive of the Labour Party was called and most of its members favoured acceptance of the Soviet proposals and the signing of the treaties. As a result, two treaties were signed by Britain and the Soviet Union on August 8, 1924. The first was a general treaty as had been provided for by the 1921 Anglo-Soviet trade agreement, and the second was a trade treaty.[25]

Under the General Treaty the Soviet government agreed to the partial satisfaction of the claims of British holders of prewar tsarist debt papers and, as an exception, to begin talks with British nationals, ex-owners of nationalised property in Russia, on compensation for well-founded claims. The final figure of compensation to be paid was to be determined by further negotiations and would be the subject of a new treaty. After that treaty would be signed, the British government undertook to take the necessary steps to provide government guarantees for a loan to the Soviet government in Britain. The questions of war debts and Soviet counter-claims for reparations for damages caused by the intervention were left as matters to be discussed in the future. That meant they were being shelved indefinitely.

The Anglo-Soviet Trade Treaty recognised the state monopoly on foreign trade in the USSR, set out the legal status of the Soviet trade mission, and its functions. It also gave the trade representative and the mission staff personal immunity and the offices of the mission extra-territorial status. The Treaty was founded on the mutual granting of most-favoured-nation treatment. In the conclusion of both treaties the Soviet government had successfully safeguarded the nation's state interests.

At the final session of the Conference, the Soviet delegation read out a declaration on the most important international problems, in which it opposed military alliances, as having always led to wars, and stressed the need for disarmament.

Following the signing of the Anglo-Soviet treaties, the reactionary forces in Britain stepped up their anti-Soviet campaign in the hope of getting these important documents annulled. The most bitter opponents of the treaties included the Conservative Party members Churchill[26] and Chamberlain, and the Liberals Lloyd George, Asquith, etc.

British reactionary circles used anti-Soviet forgery in their election campaign—the so-called Zinoviev letter. At that time Zinoviev headed the Comintern Executive. The letter was claimed to have been written by him to the leadership of the British Communist Party. It listed the various ways in which the Communists could stage a coup and capture state power.

[25] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, pp. 609-35.

[26] By that time Churchill had returned to the Conservative Party, which he had left for the Labour Party before World War I.

MacDonald could not have failed to know that the "letter" was a forgery. Nevertheless, the British government sent the Soviet Ambassador in London a Note accusing the Soviet government of interference in Britain's internal affairs and of violating the Treaty of August 8, 1924. Without much difficulty the Soviet government proved the Zinoviev letter to be a crude and outrageous forgery. It suggested that the matter be investigated by an impartial court of inquiry. A special committee set up by the Labour government under public pressure declared in its report that the original of the letter had not been seen by anyone. Later MacDonald himself had to acknowledge that its authenticity had remained unproved. Nevertheless, the British government did not turn the matter over to an impartial court of inquiry[27] and allowed the forgery to be used to wreck the Anglo-Soviet treaties.

In October 1924 the British Parliament was dissolved and a date for new elections fixed. Labour lost the election and the Conservative Party took over office with Baldwin as Prime Minister. On November 24 he announced that he could not submit the treaties to Parliament nor to the King for ratification. Thus, it was the anti-Sovieteers who gained the upper hand in British ruling circles, those who opposed the Soviet state and still hoped to destroy it.

The United States also played a part in wrecking the Anglo-Soviet treaties. It itself refused to recognise the Soviet Union and sought to prevent closer relations between the Soviet Union and Britain. What is more, the USA opposed the idea of annulling the war debts that was implicit in the Anglo-Soviet treaties. As Chicherin put it, the top reactionary circles in the capitalist world had been displeased with the Anglo-Soviet treaty and were out for revenge.[28] In London American diplomacy was very busy behind the scenes bent on getting the Anglo-Soviet treaties annulled. In the final count, the reactionary British and American circles did get Britain to go back on its treaty with the USSR.

But what the British reaction failed to achieve was a break in diplomatic relations between the USSR and Britain. Failure to ratify the Anglo-Soviet treaties did not affect the British government's recognition of the USSR, although it left outstanding disputed issues between the two countries unsettled.

Recognition of the USSR by Italy and Other Countries

Relations with Italy occupied a fairly prominent place in Soviet foreign policy. Italy was interested in receiving raw materials and food

[27] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, pp. 718-20.
[28] Ibid., p. 437.

from Russia. As early as June 1920 Tsentrosoyuz, the Soviet cooperative organisation, signed an agreement with Italian cooperative organisations under which Italy supplied Russia with medicines, farm machinery and electrical engineering goods, receiving in return grain and oil. In 1921 a trade delegation from the Russian Federation led by V. V. Vorovsky went to Rome and talks on a trade treaty were begun. In the autumn of 1923 Italy announced that simultaneously with the signing of the trade treaty it was prepared to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR. Speaking in the Italian Parliament on November 30, 1923, Mussolini stated that it was necessary to extend legal recognition to Soviet Russia. "We should approach the problem solely from the standpoint of our national interests," he declared. "It would be to the advantage of the national economy and the Italian people to give de jure recognition to Soviet Russia.... But Russia too must give something in return. I demand a good trade agreement. I demand concessions for the raw materials Italy requires."[29]

Negotiations on establishing diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Italy began in September 1923. From the very beginning the USSR agreed to give Italy certain economic advantages that it would not get if de jure recognition was delayed.

But the Soviet government was aware that Italy was no less interested than the Soviet Union in normalising relations. It was in acute need of foreign markets as many industries were deep in depression. In 1923 its balance of trade deficit widened significantly.

The Soviet government stemmed from the premise that recognition was an absolutely essential condition for the development of trade between the two countries. Chicherin pointed out that the Soviet Union was interested in normalising relations with Italy, but it would also be equally useful for Italy. "... We are making economic concessions," he said, "since these offer us economic advantages.... What we shall not do is buy de jure recognition. We shall go no further in our talks with Italy: mutual concessions for the sake of mutual advantages, and that is all."[30] However, the Italian government put forward unacceptable pre-conditions.

When the MacDonald government took office in Britain, Mussolini opened negotiations with London on the matter of relations with the USSR. MacDonald suggested during these talks that the two governments confine themselves to sending only chargés d'affaires to Moscow. In contravention of earlier promises made to Soviet representatives, Mussolini agreed to refrain from an exchange of ambassadors. Italian representatives informed the British Foreign Office to this effect on January 30, 1924, but a couple of days later, on February 2, Mussolini learnt from the newspapers that the day before,

[29] *Izvestia*, December 13, 1923.

[30] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 607.

February 1, the British government had recognised the USSR and thus got in ahead of Italy. The Italian government decided to make good the lost time and took steps to move the negotiations with the USSR quickly so as to complete them in a matter of days.

The final text of the trade treaty between the USSR and Italy was agreed on between February 3 and 6. The Soviet government agreed to grant Italy certain trade and tariff concessions. In return the Italian side was forced to make concessions as well and gave up its demands for an immediate settlement of the matter of debts and other claims, as well as for restrictions on the monopoly of foreign trade and certain other issues.

On February 7, 1924, the Italian government announced that it was desirous of resuming political relations between the two countries, believing this would be useful both for their own interests and those of Europe as a whole.[31] It underlined that this settled the matter of the de jure recognition of the Soviet government. The Soviet reply expressed confidence that the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries would have a favourable effect on economic ties and on the friendly cooperation between the Italian and Soviet peoples.[32] It also noted with satisfaction the Italian government's decision to appoint an ambassador to Moscow immediately and stated that, for its part, it too would shortly appoint an ambassador to Rome.

That same day (February 7) saw the signing of the Italian-Soviet Trade Treaty.[33] It provided for Italy's full recognition of the monopoly on foreign trade in the USSR, set out the legal status of the Soviet trade mission and its functions, gave the trade representative and his staff diplomatic immunity, and extraterritorial rights to the mission's offices. The Treaty was based on the principle of each country giving the other most-favoured-nation treatment. The establishment of diplomatic relations and the signing of the Trade Treaty created a favourable climate for the further advancement of political and economic relations between the two countries.

The restoration of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Britain and Italy led to quicker recognition of the USSR by a number of other countries. The Soviet government for its part also took the necessary steps. Many European countries announced that they had decided to recognise the USSR and intended to establish diplomatic relations with it.

Such relations were established in 1924 by Norway, Austria, Sweden, Greece and Denmark. That same year an exchange of notes took place on establishing diplomatic relations between the USSR and

31 Ibid., p. 91.

32 Ibid., p. 92.

33 Ibid., pp. 68-88.

Albania, although in effect they did not materialise.[34] On September 5 a treaty was signed establishing diplomatic and consular relations between the USSR and Hungary, but it never came into force. Under pressure from reactionary forces inside the country, as well as from Britain and the United States, the Hungarian government refused to ratify the treaty.

In April 1924 relations were established between the USSR and Hajaz,[35] which became the first Arab state to enter into diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union.

The USSR and France

It was in 1924 also that France began normalising relations with the USSR, although in the years before its ruling circles had pursued a strikingly anti-Soviet policy. The trend for recognition of the USSR began to grow stronger in French commercial and industrial circles, as well as political circles in 1923-24. Objective causes were pushing France to normalise relations with the USSR. The Soviet Union offered French industrialists a market where they could sell their goods profitably, and at the same time buy raw materials, especially oil. Russian-French cooperation had always strengthened France's international position. There could be no doubt that French recognition of the USSR and the normalisation of Soviet-French political relations coincided with France's interests and would consolidate its position in Europe. Edouard Herriot, a prominent figure in the Radical Socialist Party, began to campaign vigorously for the establishment of normal relations with the USSR.

On December 22, 1923, *Le Temps*, a newspaper close to government circles, called for the restoration of diplomatic and economic relations with the USSR, but it maintained that this should be done on condition that the Soviet government acknowledge all the debts of the tsarist and Provisional governments and compensate French citizens—holders of Russian securities and former owners of nationalised properties.

Despite the hostile stand taken by France, the Soviet government sought ways to surmount the difficulties that had arisen between the two countries. In an interview to an *Izvestia* correspondent in January 1924 Chicherin noted the hostile activities of French diplomacy directed against the Soviet Union throughout Eastern Europe—in Poland, the countries of the Little Entente, in Czechoslovakia, as well

[34] Shortly after Albania recognised the USSR, a coup took place in that country and the new Albanian government refused to normalise relations with the USSR. It was only ten years later, in 1934, that such relations were established.

[35] A province of Saudi Arabia now.

as in Finland and Lithuania. He named the discontinuation of such activities as the most important condition for agreement between the USSR and France.[36] Chicherin pointed out that the Soviet government desired broad economic ties between the two countries in order that they should gradually draw closer to each other.[37]

In another interview at the end of January, this time for the French *Le Temps*, Chicherin spoke of the peaceful nature of Soviet foreign policy: "Our policy of peace is a creative policy. We tell our people that the Soviet Republic signifies peace peace not only for developing our productive forces, but also for advancing world production of which our output is an integral part. These ideas which we have already upheld in Geneva were formulated by Lenin's genius. It was for the express purpose of accelerating the build-up of our productive forces that inside the country he introduced the New Economic Policy and on the world scene -economic cooperation with foreign capital. It was one of Lenin's main ideas to attract foreign capital on the basis of agreement acceptable to both sides, and the sharing of the advantage without becoming enshackled by foreign capital. That remains our programme for the future."[38]

Under pressure from commercial and industrial circles interested in developing economic ties with the USSR, as well as pressure from the public at large, Poincaré made an attempt to start negotiations with the Soviet government early in 1924. However, as events were to show, Poincaré aimed at getting in return for recognition a number of concessions from the Soviet government on a number of vital matters. On January 3, 1924, the Soviet Ambassador to Czechoslovakia K. K. Yurenev reported to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs that Czechoslovakia's Foreign Minister Benes had made the following statement to him at the request of the French government:

"France is prepared to enter into treaty relations with Russia but it sets a number of preconditions.... Poincaré requests answers to the following questions from the USSR Government:

"1) Is it prepared to respect international treaties?

"2) Would it agree in principle to acknowledge prewar debts (over 20,000 million francs).

"The question of repayment of debts would be the subject of special talks. Russia would, of course, be given a long-term moratorium. The question of compensation of damages incurred by French citizens in Russia also figures on the agenda of negotiations, but this matter ... is of secondary importance and is not made a condition for the beginning of Franco-Russian talks."[39]

[36] G. V. Chicherin, op. cit., p. 269.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., p. 285.

[39] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 11.

As in the case of Britain, the Soviet government rejected these preconditions. The USSR did not deem it possible to buy recognition at the price of concessions on the most important disputed issues. On January 11 Chicherin replied to the Ambassador in Prague that "the questions are too complicated for a simple yes or no. In general we reject any preliminary conditions for entering into negotiations with other governments".[40]

On April 9, 1924, the prominent French lawyer and businessman de Monzie, speaking in the French Senate, criticised the Poincaré government's policy on the Russian issue. "Two facts are indisputable," he declared. "Bolshevik power exists, our interests in Russia and our claims to Russia exist, and France's entire stand and policy cannot be expressed by that formula of war and cautiousness that you probably remember: 'Take care and wait!' "[41] De Monzie also asked the Prime Minister what he believed were the conditions for de jure recognition of the USSR. French ruling circles, however, continued to insist that the USSR accept shackling preliminary conditions.

Soviet achievements in restoring industry and agriculture, as well as the government's peaceful Leninist foreign policy designed to establish normal political relations and advance trade and economic ties were all strongly influencing world public opinion. The number of advocates of normal relations with the Soviet Union was increasing in all the capitalist countries. France was no exception.

A general election took place in France in May 1924, and it brought victory to the so-called left bloc – a coalition of the Radical Socialist, Republican Socialist and Socialist parties, which had made the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR one of its election slogans. The new government was led by Herriot, a bourgeois democrat, and advocate of Franco-Soviet cooperation, who enjoyed well-deserved recognition and prestige in his country. Herriot himself was to point out that "the absence of any official relationship with a government that had actually maintained power in Russia for seven years created an abnormal situation running counter to the French people's interests".[42] The government's programme statement had this to say on the subject: "We are already preparing to resume normal relations with the USSR on conditions that are set for us by respect for treaties. Before drafting a formula for recognition that would protect French interests, we must take certain precautions and collect facts, which we have begun to do."[43]

[40] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Instructions from the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador in Prague, January 11, 1924.

[41] A. de Monzie, *Du Kremlin au Luxemburg*, Paris, 1924, p. 208.

[42] E. Herriot, *From the Past. In Between Two Wars. 1914-1936*, Moscow, 1958, p. 253 (in Russian).

[43] CSAOR, f. 391, op. 2, d. 50, l. 191.

On July 15, 1924, Herriot informed Chicherin "of his intention to prepare in a short space of time for the resumption of normal relations with Russia".[44] Chicherin replied on July 18, stating that the Soviet government had taken note with deep satisfaction of Herriot's friendly statement "regarding the solution in the nearest future of the matter of the resumption of normal relations between the two countries".[45] In reply to Herriot's announcement that the French government would give the widest possible consideration to the requests of Russian citizens wishing to visit France, Chicherin wrote: "French citizens will in a similar situation be given the same consideration as citizens of other countries...."[46] The message noted that delays and difficulties in such matters were the inevitable consequence of the absence of official relations between the two governments.[47] In reality, however, "the nearest future" mentioned by Herriot did not prove so very near. The French government was in no hurry to extend recognition and erected all sorts of artificial barriers to such recognition.

In September 1924 Herriot appointed a special commission with de Monzie as its head to study the question of French recognition of the Soviet Union. The commission suggested that talks on disputed issues should begin between the two countries after diplomatic relations had been normalised, but at the same time it insisted that the official document of recognition should include provisions that would "safeguard" French rights and interests in Russia.[48] So just like the MacDonald government, the left-wing government in France also tried to impose as a preliminary condition on the Soviet Union the settlement in principle of outstanding issues, and especially the matter of tsarist Russia's debts.

The Soviet Ambassador to Britain Rakovsky had a meeting with de Monzie in Dover on October 19-20, 1924, during which he was shown the draft of the French note on recognition of the USSR. De Monzie also informed the Ambassador in detail of the work of his commission and the difficulties it was encountering. He said that the government had decided to appoint the diplomatic editor of the newspaper *Le Temps*, G. Erbette as Ambassador to the USSR.[49] One of the major obstacles to the normalisation of the Soviet Union's relations with France, as with Britain, was the United States' opposition and its policy of isolating the Soviet Union. As *The New York*

[44] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 399.

[45] Ibid., p. 398.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., p. 399.

[48] H. Slovès, *La France et l'Union Soviétique*, Paris, 1935, p. 190.

[49] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter of the Soviet Ambassador in London to the USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, October 24, 1924.

Herald Tribune put it, the American Administration let the French authorities know that the United States had no intention of changing its position on de jure recognition before Russia acknowledged its financial obligations, as well as its social ones and recognised the sanctity of private property.[50] The French Embassy in Washington officially asked the Secretary of State Hughes about recognition of the USSR and received the reply that such an action would be a mistake. In the summer of 1924 Hughes made a special trip to Europe to prevent the restoration of Soviet-French diplomatic relations. Marcel Cachin was to say in a speech in the Chamber of Deputies that the delay in recognition of the USSR was, for one thing, the result of Herriot's talks with American politicians.[51]

However, France's national interests which required normal relations with the USSR won the day. On October 28, 1924, Herriot sent a message on behalf of the French Council of Ministers to M. I. Kalinin, Chairman of the CEC USSR, saying that France was ready "to establish normal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union at once through the mutual exchange of ambassadors".[52] The French government noted that "as of now non-interference in internal affairs would become the guiding rule of relations between our two countries".[53] The message also stated that France was extending de jure recognition to the government of the USSR "as the government of the territories of the former Russian Empire on which its authority has been recognised by the population and as the successor on these territories to the preceding Russian governments"[54] and suggested an exchange of ambassadors. Herriot suggested that a Soviet delegation should come to Paris for negotiations on general and special economic issues.

That same day Herriot's telegram was discussed at a meeting of the CEC USSR. Reporting to the meeting, Chicherin stressed the great significance of restoring relations between the USSR and France. "We heartily welcome this action," he declared in conclusion.[55] The reply sent by the CEC to Herriot stated the CEC USSR "attaches the greatest significance to the elimination of all misunderstanding between the USSR and France and to their conclusion of a general agreement that could serve as a firm foundation for friendly relations. In this the CEC is guided by the USSR's constant desire to genuinely ensure

[50] Quoted in: N. L. Rubinstein's, *Soviet Foreign Policy 1921-1925*, Moscow, 1953, p. 475 (in Russian).

[51] Y. V. Borisov, *Soviet-French Relations (1924-1945)*, Moscow, 1964, p. 40 (in Russian).

[52] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 515.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., p. 518.

universal peace in the interests of the working masses of all countries and friendship with all peoples".[56]

On October 30 Chicherin received a telegram from Herriot expressing pleasure over the establishment of relations that would serve "to strengthen peace in Europe and the whole world". It also pointed out that "no nations are better suited for mutual understanding than the French people dedicated to justice and fraternity and the great Russian people, whose worthy qualities I have personally had the opportunity to judge".[57]

On November 14 the Presidium of the CEC USSR appointed L. B. Krasin Ambassador to France, while leaving him People's Commissar for Foreign Trade. The appointment of French Ambassador to the USSR was given to G. Erbette.

France's recognition of the USSR was of very great political significance. It provided fresh evidence of the internal growth of the Soviet Union, the strengthening of its international positions and the success of the peaceful Soviet foreign policy.

The French working people assessed the action very highly and warmly welcomed the normalisation of Soviet-French relations. The Executive Committee of the French Communist Party in a message to the Soviet people wrote: "At a time when the rulers of France have recognised the USSR, the French proletariat and the Communists congratulate their Russian brothers on this success."[58]

The further development of Soviet-French relations and particularly commercial and economic cooperation was complicated by the fact that the French side made the signing of a trade treaty conditional on an agreement on debts. As a result there was no trade treaty between the two countries for a long time and that seriously hindered the development of Soviet-French trade.

The USSR and China

The Soviet government attached great importance to establishing normal relations with its great Far Eastern neighbour—China. "Soviet Russia and China," Chicherin said in 1922, "are natural allies, and the future belongs to a friendly policy between them. Soviet Russia is the only major country that is prepared to support in every way full independence for China in all respects and the full flourishing of its independent development."[59]

The talks which had begun between Soviet Russia and China at the

[56] Ibid., p. 516.
[57] Ibid., pp. 524-25.
[58] *L'Humanité*, December 29, 1924; *Izvestia*, October 30, 1924.
[59] G. V. Chicherin, op. cit., p. 223.

end of 1921 produced no results despite the very great mutual desire for a normalisation of relations. The failure was due to imperialist powers' pressure on the Chinese government.

The Soviet delegation used its stay in China to maintain contact with Sun Yat-sen. The outstanding figure of the revolutionary national liberation movement in China and the leader of the Chinese people Sun Yat-sen was a convinced proponent of friendship between the USSR and China. "An alliance with Russia" was his main political line.[60]

During a break in the talks in January 1923, that occurred because of the Chinese side's attitude, several meetings took place in Shanghai between the leader of the Soviet diplomatic mission in Peking A. A. Joffe and Sun Yat-sen, during which the latter was informed of the aims and tasks of Soviet foreign policy and his doubts and fears were dispelled on such matters as the Soviet stand on the presence of Soviet troops in Mongolia and on the complications connected with the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER).

The joint communique that was issued noted "a complete identity of views on Chinese-Russian relations". Sun Yat-sen then said that "the question of the Chinese Eastern Railway can be resolved fully only by an authoritative Russian-Chinese conference" and that he saw "no urgent need for the immediate evacuation of Russian forces from Outer Mongolia, nor would it correspond to China's genuine interests, especially in view of the current Peking government's inability to prevent a resumption, as a result of such an evacuation, of intrigues and hostilities on the part of the whiteguards against Russia and an even worse situation than that existing today".[61]

In March 1923, in response to request from Sun Yat-sen and in keeping with a decision of the CC RCP (B) and the Soviet government, a group of military and political advisers was despatched to Southern China. The group included such prominent figures as P. A. Pavlov (who worked in China under the name of Govorov), V. K. Blücher (Galin), M. M. Borodin and others.

The Chinese historian Peng Ming wrote: "The Soviet advisers who came at the invitation of Sun Yat-sen and the revolutionary Canton government not only passed on the experience of building up the Soviet Union's Red Army and helped in drawing up strategic plans; they were also in the very thick of the revolutionary battles with our soldiers, sharing with them both joys and sorrows."[62]

[60] For more information about Sun Yat-sen see S. L. Tikhvinsky, *Sun Yat-sen. Foreign Policy Views and Practice*, Moscow, 1964 (in Russian).

[61] *Soviet-Chinese Relations 1917-1957. Collection of Documents*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 64-65 (in Russian).

[62] Peng Ming, *The History of Sino-Soviet Friendship*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 156-57 (in Russian).

An influential Chinese military delegation arrived in the USSR on September 2, 1923, and stayed for three months.

Sun Yat-sen never raised the question of establishing diplomatic relations because of the great geographical distance between Soviet Russia and the Canton government and the complicated political situation in China, which made the establishment of more or less permanent trade and economic relations impossible. Replying to a question put by a Japanese correspondent in Canton on the eve of the signing of the Soviet-Chinese agreements in Peking in May 1924, he said: "Relations between Soviet Russia and my government are so friendly that they resemble ties between brothers and are in no need of such formalities as recognition.... In fact, friendly relations between my government and Russia continue. They were never discontinued, so there is no question of restoring them by special formal recognition, as my government has virtually recognised Russia unconditionally."[63]

In March 1923 the Peking government resumed the talks with the USSR. The Soviet government sent a delegation to China for this purpose, appointing its leader L. M. Karakhan as Ambassador. He submitted a copy of his credentials to the Foreign Ministry in Peking with the request that he should be informed when he could present them to the President. However, these negotiations were dragged out for a whole year by the Chinese under pressure from foreign imperialists. In the meantime Sun Yat-sen wrote to Karakhan that the genuine interests of the two countries "require the shaping of a common policy that would allow us to live on a footing of equality with other countries and would free us from political and economic slavery imposed by the world system that is founded on force and operates by the methods of economic imperialism".[64] He offered to help the Soviet delegation at the Peking talks. On September 17, 1923, he cabled Karakhan: "It hardly needs saying that you can count on me to give what help I can to advance your present mission in China. You will, however, find the negotiations with the Peking group extremely difficult, since in its relations with Russia it in effect carries out the *mot d'ordre*[65] of the embassy quarter...." He warned that the "capitalist powers would try to inflict a diplomatic defeat on Soviet Russia through Peking and using Peking as their tool. But you should always remember that I am prepared to crush any attempt to humiliate you and your government, and am now able to do so."[66] It was only on March 14, 1924, that Karakhan and the leader of the Chinese delega-

[63] *Narody Azii i Afriki*, 1966, No. 2, pp. 138-40.

[64] *Sun Yat-sen. 1866-1966. For the Centenary of His Birth. Collection of Articles, Memoirs and Documents*, Moscow, 1966, p. 325 (in Russian).

[65] French: instructions.

[66] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VI, p. 435.

tion Wan Chen-ting initialled the texts of the agreements and the joint declarations on the basic principles of a settlement of Soviet-Chinese relations, on the Chinese Eastern Railway and certain other matters. But on the very next day it was learnt that the Chinese government forbade the signing of the agreement, on the pretext that Wan Chen-ting did not have the powers to approve the conditions stipulated in the initialled agreements and declarations.[67] The Soviet People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs sent a protest in this connection to the Chinese representative in the USSR.[68]

China took such a step as a result of the strong pressure on the Peking government from France, the United States and Japan, who opposed the establishment of relations between China and its socialist neighbour. They feared that agreement reached with the USSR on a footing of equality would create a dangerous precedent for the imperialists, and would undermine the unequal treaties that formed the basis for the colonialist privileges in China.

The question of the Chinese Eastern Railway, which had been resolved in the Soviet-Chinese agreement was chosen as the pretext for torpedoing the Soviet-Chinese negotiations. The railway issue concerned only the USSR and China, yet this did not prevent the French and American governments from lodging protests with the Chinese government and putting forward their own absolutely unsubstantiated claims to the CER and in effect demanding the annullment of the already signed Soviet-Chinese agreement. The unofficial representative of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in the United States B. Y. Skvirsky told a Soviet newsman that the Soviet government had documents to prove that America was exercising pressure hostile to the restoration of Soviet-Chinese friendship.[69] The CC of the Party and the Soviet government, he said, regard the American and French actions as imperialist actions of powers which believe that the world belongs to them and that they have the right to decide the fate of other nations. "The USSR has already made it clear to great powers that it does not wish to have them interfere in the affairs of the USSR, and it now proposes to teach them not to interfere in Soviet-Chinese affairs."[70] The editor-in-chief of the newspaper *China Press*, an American national, described what happened as follows: "All of a sudden China went back on the already signed agreement. The main reason was that it feared pressure from the US Secretary of State Hughes."[71]

However, a popular movement of protest began in China against

[67] *Izvestia*, March 25, 1924.

[68] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 156.

[69] *Izvestia*, May 15, 1924.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Quoted in: Peng Ming, *Short History of the Friendship Between the Peoples of China and the Soviet Union*, Moscow, 1957, p. 44 (in Russian).

the brazen interference of the United States and France in Chinese affairs and the violation of its sovereignty. Fearing the growing indignation among the people, the Chinese government reversed its position. Soviet-Chinese talks were resumed on May 21, and ten days later, on May 31, 1924, the Agreement on the Basic Principles for a Settlement Between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Chinese Republic was signed.[72] It provided for normal diplomatic and consular relations between the two countries.

The Agreement also stipulated that "the Governments of the two Contracting Parties have agreed to hold a conference within one month after the signing of the Agreement" to draft agreements on a number of concrete issues.

The Soviet government confirmed that it would not demand consular rights, extraterritorial rights and a number of other imperialist privileges enjoyed by the tsarist government. The Chinese Eastern Railway built by the tsarist regime on Chinese territory using taxpayers' money, that is, the money of the Russian people, was proclaimed a purely commercial undertaking and was to be run by the two countries together on an equal footing. In keeping with this agreement the governments of the USSR and China declared that all treaties, agreements and other acts concluded by the tsarist government and any third party and affecting the sovereign rights or interests of China to be null and void.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and China was an important achievement of Soviet foreign policy. It was likewise to a large extent the result of the struggle of the democratic forces in China which forced the Peking government to officially recognise the Soviet Union.

The bilateral agreement was the first equal treaty for China which shook the whole system of unequal relations practiced by the imperialist powers.

In connection with the signing of the Soviet-Chinese agreement Sun Yat-sen issued a special message on behalf of his party in which he noted that the signing "had taken place only thanks to the fact that Russia had renounced its former privileges in China and annulled all previous treaties that violated China's sovereignty; all that was done by Russia voluntarily and stemmed from its revolutionary principles".[73]

The Soviet-Chinese Agreement provided a striking illustration of the foreign policy principles of the socialist state, above all the principle of proletarian internationalism. It promoted the Chinese people's struggle against imperialism and, specifically, annulled the unequal treaties that had been imposed on it.

[72] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, pp. 331-35.

[73] *Narody Azii i Afriki*, 1966, No. 5, pp. 152-55.

The Soviet-Japanese Agreement of January 20, 1925

A major milestone in the string of de jure recognition of the USSR was the conclusion of an agreement with Japan. The Soviet government sought mutually advantageous cooperation with Japan.

At the end of 1922 the Red Army and partisan units operating jointly evicted the Japanese invaders from the Far East. Shortly after that the Far Eastern Republic decided to join the Russian Federation. These events compelled Japan to define its attitude towards the USSR. But the Japanese imperialists continued their anti-Soviet policy and retained their hold on Northern Sakhalin which they had captured and were ruthlessly plundering.

In the meantime industrial circles in Japan were interested in developing economic ties with the Soviet Union. More and more often they raised the question of normalising economic and political ties. In the spring of 1923 the Soviet government instructed its diplomatic representative in China A. A. Joffe to begin talks on the normalisation of Soviet-Japanese relations.

From the Japanese side the negotiations were conducted by Viscount Goto, Mayor of Tokyo, a man closely connected with railway and shipping companies that had important commercial interests in the Russian Far East before the revolution. Goto had far-reaching plans for the economic penetration of the Soviet Far East and he pushed them assiduously believing that the economic difficulties facing the Soviet state as a result of the intervention would favour their implementation.

The Soviet government's programme was outlined in a letter sent by Joffe to the Prime Minister through Goto. Three preliminary conditions were set for the beginning of Soviet-Japanese talks on the normalisation of relations: 1) equality of the two sides at the talks, 2) Japan's consent to negotiate the conclusion of a treaty setting up diplomatic and consular relations and 3) the official fixing of a deadline acceptable to the USSR for Japan's evacuation of Northern Sakhalin.[74]

On March 21, 1923, the Chief of the Department for Europe and America in the Japanese Foreign Ministry replied through Goto to Joffe's proposals. Japan agreed with the first condition, but stipulated that recognition of the Soviet Union could follow only after the settlement of the Nikolayevsk incident[75] and the fulfilment of

[74] *Annual Report of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs for 1923*, Moscow, 1924, p. 145 (in Russian).

[75] What happened in Nikolayevsk-on-Amur was this. In January 1920 the Japanese garrison of the town surrendered to a partisan unit commanded by the anarchist Tryapitsyn and signed a treaty turning the town over to the partisans. Two weeks later in violation of the treaty the Japanese attacked the par-

international obligations. Evacuation of troops from Northern Sakhalin was made dependent on a settlement of the Nikolayevsk incident. During the talks the Japanese side also raised the matter of Soviet recognition of the obligations of the tsarist and Provisional governments (this meant recognition of almost 300 million roubles' worth of old debts). The Soviet representative rejected this condition as unacceptable. Joffe also turned down as unacceptable the Japanese proposal that Sakhalin should be sold to Japan. He likewise rejected the claims for the preliminary recognition of the debt obligations of tsarist Russia and the return of private property held by Japanese nationals. He proved the complicity of the Japanese command in the Nikolayevsk events. The Japanese representative was forced to withdraw his demand for compensation. At the same time the Soviet side agreed in principle to Japan receiving concessions on Sakhalin and in other areas of the Russian Far East.

The talks produced no results at this stage. The Japanese government was still hoping that it could make the Soviet government accede to its demands. Its position was also influenced by pressure from the United States and the Entente countries. American and British diplomatic representatives were doing their utmost to hinder the Soviet-Japanese talks. Articles in the British and American press warned the Japanese government of the "dangers" of establishing relations with the USSR.

In May 1924, a general election in Japan brought the Kato government to office and the post of Foreign Minister went to Shidehara, who favoured the normalisation of relations with the USSR. After a certain amount of hesitation, the Japanese government resumed its talks with the Soviet Union through its Ambassador in Peking. One factor that influenced the government considerably was the firm stand taken by the Soviet Union at the talks then underway on leasing fishing rights to Japan in Soviet Far-Eastern territorial waters. The agreement signed between the two countries in April 1924 put an end to indiscriminate Japanese fishing in Soviet waters and restored Soviet sovereignty in the area. All this was conducive to the success for the talks on a general agreement between the two countries. Another factor of no little significance was the upsurge of the democratic movement in Japan.

The Soviet-Japanese talks were concluded in January 1925, with the signing of a convention on the basic principles of relations between the two countries, and the establishment of diplomatic and consular relations. Both sides declared their desire to live in peace and friend-

tisans. They lost the battle and 100 of them were taken prisoners. Later, when the Japanese marched on the town, Tryapitsyn shot the prisoners. For this he was put on trial and sentenced to death by the partisans. The Nikolayevsk incident was used by the Japanese as their justification for the occupation of Northern Sakhalin.

ship and pledged to stem in their relations from the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs and to refrain from any hostile activities against each other. Japan was compelled to agree to evacuate its troops from Northern Sakhalin by May 15, 1925. The Soviet government expressed readiness to grant Japanese nationals concessions for the exploitation of mineral, forest and other natural resources in Northern Sakhalin and the Soviet Far East. This was designed to speed up the rehabilitation of the economy in the Far East that had been devastated by invasion and the whiteguards. At the same time, this met the interests of the Japanese side. Since at that time the Soviet government was unable to eliminate the aftermath of Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, it had to acknowledge that the treaty concluded in Portsmouth on September 5, 1905, remained valid, including its territorial clauses that gave Japan the Russian territory of Southern Sakhalin. When the treaty was signed, the Soviet government issued a special declaration, stating that "recognition ... of the validity of the Portsmouth Treaty ... in no way signified that the Soviet government shared with the former tsarist government political responsibility for the conclusion of that treaty".[76] This stipulation meant that recognition of the Portsmouth Treaty was a temporary measure. In recognising that treaty the Soviet Union proceeded from the belief that a number of its provisions could serve to strengthen peace in the Far East: for one thing, the provision that Japanese troops should not be stationed in Manchuria, and for another, Japan's recognition of China's sovereignty over it. Other points included the ban on the construction of military fortifications and any other installations on Sakhalin and the adjacent islands, the pledge that both sides refrain from any military measures that could threaten peace between them on the Russo-Korean border, and certain others. A special protocol attached to the Peking Convention stipulated that all matters connected with debts to the government of Japan or its nationals stemming from loans to the tsarist and Provisional governments would be left for future negotiations.

The 1925 Peking Convention ensured the Soviet Union a long period of peace in the Far East. In the first half of May 1925 the evacuation of Japanese troops from Northern Sakhalin was completed. Throughout the Soviet Far East work began on rehabilitating the economy.

The signing of the Peking Convention was met with hostility by the American imperialists. *The Evening Post*, a Republican newspaper, noted with obvious irritation and unfriendliness in an editorial that the USSR had forged an effective weapon to break the iron ring designed for the Pacific area by the Washington Conference.[77]

[76] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VIII, Moscow, 1963, p. 77.
[77] *Izvestia*, January 27, 1925.

The USSR and Latin American Countries

The movement for normal diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with the Soviet Union began to spread in the Latin American countries in 1924-25. The peoples of Latin America wholeheartedly welcomed the Soviet Union's peaceful policy. A movement of solidarity with Soviet Russia gained considerable scope during the years of the imperialist intervention in the Soviet Russia, especially in such countries as Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay. The working people in the Latin American countries regarded Soviet Russia as a model of struggle for national independence. Many trade union leaders and part of the national bourgeoisie also supported the movement for the normalisation of relations with the USSR.

On June 25, 1924, the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* published the interview given to its special correspondent Alvarez del Vayo by G. V. Chicherin. "We would be very happy," he pointed out, "to resume relations with Argentina and all countries in South America. Any South American country's initiative in this respect would meet with our understanding and support."[78]

However, the ruling circles in a number of Latin American countries, primarily under pressure from the United States, sabotaged the normalisation of relations with the Soviet Union.

The first to set up diplomatic ties was Mexico. Talks between the two countries began in the summer of 1923 in Berlin when the Soviet Ambassador to Germany N. N. Krestinsky had a meeting with the Mexican Ambassador to the same country del Castillo.[79]

On October 16, 1923, Krestinsky forwarded to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs the proposal made by the Mexican President General Obregon to exchange trade missions, with an eye to establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries.[80] The Soviet government replied that "since neither country had any material claims on the other, we can agree to the resumption of relations only on condition of complete mutual de jure recognition".[81] The Soviet government believed that the two sides should exchange envoys and then through normal diplomatic channels begin settling all matters.[82]

The Soviet-Mexican talks on mutual recognition began in Berlin in February 1924. By June agreement was reached in principle, and on August 4 the Mexican Ambassador in Berlin Hortis Rubio handed the USSR Ambassador to Germany a note on establishing official

[78] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 391.
[79] Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 478.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., p. 487.
[82] Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 370.

diplomatic relations with the USSR.[83]

The first Soviet envoy to a country on the American continent S. S. Pestkovsky arrived in Mexico early in November 1924. Presenting his credentials to the Mexican President he pointed out that the peoples of the Soviet Union were following with keen interest the Mexican people's successes in their heroic struggle for independence. "One hundred years of struggle of the working masses of the United States of Mexico for independence against the imperialist intrigues of various foreign powers," Pestkovsky declared, "have aroused in the broad masses of workers and peasants of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics sincere and profound sympathies for the Mexican people."[84] In conclusion, he stressed the Soviet people's solidarity with the Mexican people in this struggle.[85]

That same month the Mexican Envoy Vadillo presented his credentials in Moscow. Accepting them, M. I. Kalinin said that each success of the Mexican people in their struggle for independence and a better future "found a warm response in the hearts of the Soviet working masses".[86]

The second Latin American country, and the only other one, to establish official diplomatic relations with the USSR in the prewar years was Uruguay. Telegrams to this effect were exchanged on August 21-22, 1926. The normalisation of Soviet-Uruguay relations helped to a certain extent to develop trade between the two countries.[87]

There was great interest in Argentina in setting up political and economic ties with the USSR. In the already mentioned interview given by Chicherin to a *La Nación* correspondent, Chicherin stated that "the resumption of Argentina's relations with the Soviet Union would correspond to the interests of both the Soviet Union and Argentina".[88] The Soviet government repeatedly reaffirmed its readiness for practical steps in this direction through its diplomatic representatives abroad. But Argentina's Parliamentary Foreign Affairs' Commission decided that such recognition would be "premature", and the Argentine Envoy in Rome officially told the Soviet government as much.[89] Argentina's Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin quite frankly explained the reason for such a policy to Krestinsky on

[83] Ibid., pp. 369-70, 714.

[84] Ibid., p. 535.

[85] Ibid., pp. 535-36.

[86] Ibid., p. 549.

[87] The imperialist powers, and especially the USA, did not want to tolerate Soviet representatives in Latin America. Under their pressure, and that of internal reactionary forces, Mexico broke off diplomatic relations with the USSR on January 26, 1930, and Uruguay did the same in December 1935.

[88] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VII, p. 391.

[89] *Izvestia*, June 23, 1925.

February 5, 1925. "On this issue," he said, "Argentina will not take an independent stand, but will follow the lead of the United States."[90]

In spite of this, trade between the two countries reached fairly considerable proportions.

Other Latin American countries also sought through their diplomatic representatives abroad to probe the possibilities of establishing ties with the USSR. These included Brazil, Chile, Venezuela, Salvador, Colombia and Bolivia.[91] It was through no fault of the Soviet Union that such relations did not materialise at that time. But with a number of countries the USSR kept up fairly extensive trade ties and other contacts. At the end of 1927 a commercial society, the Southern Amtorg, was opened in Buenos Aires. Although it operated in difficult conditions, it did much to win the confidence of Latin American states and promote the trade ties between the Soviet Union and the countries of the South American continent.

Soviet-US Relations

The United States government continued to reject systematically all Soviet proposals designed to establish normal relations and produce a just settlement of disputed issues. The price American ruling circles demanded for any settlement was a radical change in the social and economic system in the Soviet Union.

In March 1923 the women's committee of the movement for the recognition of Soviet Russia petitioned the Secretary of State Hughes to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR. Hughes replied by outlining the Administration's stand on the matter. He set three conditions for recognition. First, the Soviet government should repeal its annulment of all foreign loans; secondly, American nationals should receive compensation for property nationalised in Soviet Russia; and thirdly, the "destructive propaganda of the Soviet authorities" should be stopped. He described these demands as a healthy basis of international relations.[92]

The Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, M. M. Litvinov made the following comment on Hughes' speech in a letter to B. Y. Skvirsky: "We have the impression that the American government does not genuinely want talks with us on a settlement of relations, no matter what the conditions. Had it been otherwise, the American government would have found other and more reliable ways of achieving this than press statements, interviews and speeches. Hughes

[90] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VIII, Moscow, 1963, p. 119.

[91] Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 220; Vol. VIII, pp. 128, 168, 644-45, 685 Vol. X, Moscow, 1965, pp. 125, 180, 182-83.

[92] *Soviet-American Relations 1919-1933*, Moscow, 1934, pp. 54-56 (in Russian).

in his latest speech [when receiving] the women's deputation made a number of incorrect statements, knowing that at the very first attempt to make real contact with Soviet government representatives, he would have to withdraw them."[93]

The US Administration's refusal to normalise relations with the USSR seriously hampered the development of Soviet-American economic ties. Nevertheless, these did grow as a result of Soviet purchases in the USA.

When the trend to normalise relations with the USSR began to grow in the ruling circles of many European countries and the United States itself, the American Administration took energetic steps to reverse it. President Coolidge in a message to Congress on December 6, 1923, began by saying that "our Government offers no objection to the carrying on of commerce by our citizens with the people of Russia". But hard on the heels of this statement, he declared that the American government did not, however, propose to "enter into relations with another régime which refuses to recognize the sanctity of international obligations".[94] Quite obviously, he had the USSR in mind. President Coolidge again insisted on certain conditions for any normalisation, such as recognition of debts, compensation for American citizens, no more hostility towards American institutions, and, in addition, proof of "repentance"[95] from the Soviet Union.

On December 16 Chicherin sent a telegram to President Coolidge saying that the Soviet government was ready to discuss with the US government all issues mentioned in the President's message on the basis of mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and reciprocity in resolving financial claims. "For its part," the message said, "the Soviet Government is ready to do all that depends on it and is compatible with its dignity and the interests of the USSR to achieve the desired aim of restoring friendship with the United States of America."[96]

Two days later, on December 18, Hughes told the Senate that there could be no question of talks with the Soviet Union, since the American government would not go back on the demands made to the Soviet government. He also made allegations of a continuing Soviet propaganda campaign designed to overthrow the existing system in the United States. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs suggested that an arbitration court should consider the accusations made by the Secretary of State, but the American side turned this proposal down.

[93] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VI, p. 239.

[94] *Soviet-American Relations 1919-1933*, p. 58 (Quoted from Congressional Records).

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

On July 1, 1924, Hughes again accused the USSR of interference in US internal affairs and of seeking through the American Communist Party to overthrow the existing social and political system in the United States. On September 9 another statement directed against the resumption of relations with the Soviet Union was made public.[97]

Some representatives of American business circles saw things differently. A group of American industrialists led by Eddie Sherwood visited the Soviet Union in 1926, and on their return home in a letter to the President set on record their conviction that the United States government should no longer put off recognition of the real government of Russia on conditions in keeping with common interests and the honour of both governments. The industrialists pointed out that all other leading countries in the world had recognised the present government and established trade relations with Russia. Further postponement of such recognition did not coincide with the economic interests of the United States.[98]

The United States remained the only major power not to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR in the twenties.

* * *

The imperialists proved unable to shackle the Soviet Union at either the Genoa or the Hague conferences. But relations between the USSR and most capitalist countries remained unresolved. Subsequently the Soviet government and its diplomats sought to establish normal relations with the capitalist countries and win de jure recognition for the USSR, without fettering the country with any shackling obligations. Yet that was what the imperialists sought to do. They wanted to make the USSR pay for recognition by accepting as a preliminary condition the claims of foreign countries. Soviet diplomacy frustrated these attempts of the imperialist powers.

The imperialists failed to preserve the diplomatic isolation of the USSR, just as they failed to impose shackling conditions detrimental to the political sovereignty, economic independence and interests of the Soviet state as the price for recognition.

In 1924-25 the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with 13 countries on different continents, and concluded with the capitalist countries a number of new trade treaties and concessions. It increased the volume of its foreign trade. This signified a serious failure for the policy of an economic and political boycott of the USSR and its exclusion from international relations. The normalisation of relations with many capitalist countries led to the further

[97] *Izvestia*, September 11, 1924.

[98] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from a Group of American Industrialists Led by Eddie Sherwood (undated).

growth of the Soviet Union's international prestige.

The Soviet achievements on the world scene in 1924-25 marked a big step forward in the country's efforts to ensure peaceful conditions for the building of a new society. It took the Soviet Union just three years after the end of the intervention to strike a blow at the attempts to isolate it. Soviet foreign policy demonstrated vividly that the imperialist policy of strength against the Soviet Union was a failure. However, the imperialists continued their financial blockade, refusing the USSR loans and compelling it to restore its national economy practically wholly through the mobilisation of its internal reserves.

CHAPTER VIII

THE USSR'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE PEACEFUL RELATIONS IN THE YEARS OF SOCIALIST INDUSTRIALISATION (1925-1929)

The International Status of the USSR

Starting from 1924 the international situation was marked by a partial and temporary stabilisation of capitalism with some of the capitalist countries surpassing their prewar level of industrial development.

The stabilisation of capitalism was relative and insecure; it not only failed to resolve the contradictions inside the capitalist system, but it aggravated them further. This stabilisation was marked by a common policy on the part of the imperialist countries towards the defeated Germany—a policy connected with the Dawes Reparations Plan adopted in 1924, and in the Far East by the imperialists' deal on the joint shackling of China on the basis of the decisions of the Washington Conference of 1921-22.

Unlike the shaky and insecure stabilisation of capitalism that of socialism was firm and lasting. By the end of 1925 the Soviet Union had completed the restoration of its national economy. The 14th Congress of the Communist Party, held in December 1925, approved the policy of industrialisation and of turning the Soviet Union into a mighty industrial socialist power. The directives of the Congress were successfully put into practice.

The ruling circles in the imperialist countries had to recognise the failure of their plans to hinder the Soviet Union's economic advancement by refusing loans. But they still did their utmost to make Soviet economic progress, and especially socialist industrialisation, as difficult as only possible.

The imperialist powers were seriously worried by the growth of the national liberation movement in Asia and Africa, and most of all by the situation in China, where an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution had begun. On the initiative and under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party a united democratic front was formed inside the country. In February 1923 a revolutionary government was set up in Canton under the chairmanship of the great Chinese revolutionary democrat Sun Yat-sen, in which Communists participated alongside the Kuomintang. It was the Communists who were the life and soul of the Chinese people's movement for national and social liberation.

One country alone in the world supported the just struggle of the

Chinese people. That country was the Soviet Union. On September 12, 1924, Sun Yat-sen in a letter addressed to the Soviet representative in China declared that the time had come for China to fight openly against the forces of imperialism. "In that struggle," he wrote, "I appeal to your great country for the friendship and assistance which could help release China from the powerful clutches of imperialism and restore our political and economic independence."[1]

Sun Yat-sen appealed to the Soviet government for help in September 1924, and the government responded by immediately shipping off to Canton arms and ammunition. Thus, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union gave active support to the national liberation movement of the Chinese people. A decision adopted by the Party CC in April 1926 stressed that "the Soviet state must do everything it could to make it more difficult for the imperialists to form a united front against China. The CC noted the need to pursue a policy based on the greatest consideration for China's rights and on underlining its sovereignty".[2] The Soviet people gave their support to the Chinese revolution. A "Hands Off China" society was formed. Soviet workers, peasants and intellectuals at their meetings throughout the country decided to collect funds and organise other aid to the fighting Chinese people. In many towns industrial and office workers gave a day's wage to the Chinese fund.

In 1926 the National Revolutionary Army of China began its long march from the revolutionary South to the North in order to liberate and unite the country. The Soviet Union supplied the Revolutionary Army with arms and ammunition. Soviet military experts led by the outstanding military leader V. K. Blücher helped to draw up the strategic plan of the march to the North. This march was part of the Chinese people's national liberation struggle and it greatly extended the scope of the revolution. The Revolutionary Army routed the troops of the reactionary militarists.[3]

Meanwhile the imperialist powers viewed the Chinese revolution as a serious threat to their domination. They were highly disturbed

[1] Sun Yat-sen, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1964, p. 571 (in Russian).

[2] *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 4, Book 1, Moscow, 1970, p. 436 (in Russian).

[3] The internationalist Soviet aid to the Chinese revolution in the twenties benefitted subsequent Soviet-Chinese relations, and helped to consolidate the democratic, left forces in the country's national liberation movement.

The present-day official historiography, however, endeavours to discredit the foreign and home policy of the Soviet Union and Soviet-Chinese cooperation. It ignores the influence the 1917 October Revolution exercised on the development of the revolutionary movement in China, the role played by Soviet internationalist revolutionaries in the national liberation struggle of the Chinese people, and distorts the history of bilateral Soviet-Chinese relations. It endeavours to prove that the Soviet Union had invariably pursued none but its own selfish interest, which was contrary to China's interests.

and irritated by Soviet aid to the Chinese revolution.

The imperialist powers, and first and foremost Britain and the United States, wanted to set up a united front of capitalist countries against the Soviet Union. Their main efforts were directed to politically isolating the USSR and arranging its financial boycott. They sought to undermine Soviet-German cooperation that had developed after the signing of the Rapallo Treaty and wanted to draw Germany into the anti-Soviet front, so as to use resurging German imperialism both against the USSR and the revolutionary movement in Western Europe. That was one of the principal aims of the Dawes Plan devised by the American monopolies.

British diplomacy took the initiative in putting together an anti-Soviet bloc. In October 1925 a conference was held in Locarno, which was attended by Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Belgium, as well as Czechoslovakia and Poland. The Western powers also hoped to use the League of Nations against the Soviet Union, and to this end they insisted that Germany should join it. It was felt that when Germany joined the League of Nations, it should also join in the economic blockade of the Soviet Union, and, should the need arise, not only permit interventionist forces to cross its territory, but also possibly to participate directly in a war against the Soviet Union.[4]

The Rhine Pact signed in Locarno was a treaty concluded between France, Belgium, Germany, Britain and Italy to ensure the Western powers against any German plans for revenge and to direct such plans to the East. That was the concept that guided British politicians when they guaranteed the borders of Germany's western neighbours, but refused such guarantees to its eastern neighbours. The Locarno agreements were directed against the Soviet Union, but they also seriously undermined the security of Poland and Czechoslovakia. These agreements and the drawing of Germany into the League of Nations marked an important milestone in the formation of a coalition of powers hostile to the USSR. Britain and the USA allocated Germany a prominent place in the emerging anti-Soviet bloc.

The 14th Communist Party Congress in its resolution on the CC report noted that the relative stabilisation in Europe under the leadership of Anglo-American capital and the ensuing so-called "quiesence" had resulted in a whole system of economic and political blocs, the latest of which was the Locarno Conference and the so-called "guarantee treaties directed against the USSR".[5]

When the Luther-Stresemann government decided to draw closer to the Western powers, it was fully aware that any worsening of Soviet-German relations would increase Germany's dependence on the Western powers. It also realised that, reversely, by maintaining

[4] *Locarno Conference, 1925*, Moscow, 1959, p. 309 and others (in Russian).
[5] *The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 245.

normal relations with the Soviet Union, Germany would receive a certain freedom for manoeuvring and would strengthen its political and economic positions in regard to the Western powers, which would make it possible to win concessions from them.

Soviet Neutrality and Non-Aggression Treaties with Germany and Other Western States

Taking into account the sentiments prevailing among German ruling circles, the Soviet government sought to prevent Germany's membership of the League of Nations, or, at least, to minimise the anti-Soviet effect of such an action. During talks with the German Chargé d'Affaires in the USSR, Otto von Radowitz, held on September 22 and 26, 1924, the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs M. M. Litvinov pointed out that Germany's membership of the League of Nations would damage the friendly relations between the USSR and Germany, and could be detrimental to Germany's own interests.[6] On October 17 Litvinov handed over to von Radowitz the Soviet government's proposal "to conclude a formal agreement with the German government under which neither side would have the right to join the League of Nations without the other's consent."[7] On December 25, 1924, Chicherin submitted an official proposal for a political agreement between the USSR and Germany, which said in part:

"The USSR and Germany undertake not to enter in either political or economic blocs, treaties, agreements or combinations with third parties against the Contracting Parties.

"The USSR and Germany undertake in future to coordinate their actions on joining the League of Nations or sending their observers to the League of Nations."[8]

Chicherin spelled out what this meant: "... If Britain seeks to set up a united front against the USSR, Germany will not join such a coalition. On the other hand, we shall not join a coalition of France, Belgium and others against Germany."[9] When the German Ambassador to the USSR, Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau, suggested incorporating in the agreement a non-aggression clause, Chicherin replied: "We are always ready to conclude non-aggression pacts with any country and ... it seems logically possible to have a non-aggression pact both with Germany and with Poland and all other countries. Our formula, however, goes much further."[10]

[6] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VIII, p. 784.
[7] Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 490.
[8] Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 785.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., pp. 785-86.

The negotiations on a Soviet-German treaty continued for over a year. The German government, however, was playing a double game and tried to evade acceptance of the Soviet proposals. In this connection the Soviet government sent it a memorandum on June 2, 1925, analysing in detail the consequences of German membership of the League of Nations. Pointing out that Germany's position in the League would make it impossible for it to conduct a policy absolutely independent from Britain and other Allied countries, the Soviet government noted that the German representative "would be compelled on a whole series of occasions to join his voice to the general chorus".[11] "... What would be fateful for Soviet-German relations," the memorandum underlined, "would be not only the participation of Germany itself in military or economic sanctions against the USSR, but also if Germany, while not itself participating in their execution, would in one case or another agree by its vote to their use by other member countries."[12] The memorandum stressed that if Germany joined the League of Nations, the political logic of events would gradually lead to its complete re-orientation to the West and to Germany being drawn into one or another combination of Allied powers against the Soviet Union. The Soviet government invited Germany to take another path, specifically that of preserving and strengthening the political and economic relations between the USSR and Germany, the foundation for which had been laid in Rapallo.

On July 1, 1925, the German government sent the chief of its Eastern Europe Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Herbert von Dirksen, to Moscow for talks with the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. He had the following proposals to make: instead of a political agreement in the form of a treaty, as the Soviet government insisted, Germany suggested a statement on the general principles of Soviet-German relations that should be incorporated in the trade treaty then being negotiated. The German government also suggested a verbal, little-binding statement concerning the League of Nations, while a declaration should be made in writing on the development of relations in the spirit of the Rapallo Treaty.[13] The Soviet government continued to insist on its proposals.

A trade treaty with Germany was signed on October 12, 1925, while somewhat earlier agreement was reached on a short-term credit for the Soviet Union of 100 million marks to finance Soviet orders in Germany.

On November 21, 1925, following the signing of the Locarno agreements, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs handed over to Germany a new draft of a political agreement. It provided for

[11] Ibid., p. 352.
[12] Ibid., p. 353.
[13] Ibid., p. 784.

mutual non-aggression, and stated that the signatories would not enter blocs or other combinations directed against each other, and would maintain a friendly neutrality. The draft also specified that should Germany join the League of Nations, the German government "shall take all steps depending on it to oppose a possible use of military or economic sanctions against the USSR".[14]

While in Germany in December 1925, Chicherin met the State Secretary Schubert, Ambassador Brockdorff-Rantzau and Minister Stresemann. Their conversations touched on matters connected with the undertaking to maintain neutrality, with German membership of the League of Nations, and with the Soviet draft treaty. As Chicherin was to note, "Stresemann hedged and sought to avoid consent to our draft".[15] At the end of the month Stresemann sent Chicherin for his private information the German draft of a German-Soviet protocol. Although this stated that the Rapallo Treaty remained the starting point and foundation for German-Russian relations, and the two parties would keep up "friendly contacts for the purpose of reaching agreement on all political and economic matters concerning them",[16] it contained no German pledge to maintain neutrality. Under this protocol, Germany could apply articles 16 and 17 of the League of Nations covenant on sanctions to the Soviet Union only "should Russia begin an aggressive war against a third state".[17] The draft also stated that "the non-alignment of both governments with coalitions directed against the other country would correspond to the friendly nature of German-Russian relations".[18]

Chicherin replied to Stresemann early in January, 1926. He pointed out that the Soviet government would like the proposed agreement to be formulated more explicitly and to be based on concrete obligations.[19]

The Germans submitted a new draft. This time it was the draft of a treaty, not a protocol. Further negotiations centred largely on the wording of Article 2 of the draft, which stipulated that the signatories would observe neutrality in the case of aggression by a third party, if it had taken place "without provocation" from the other signatory of the treaty. What is more, under the German draft, it was Germany itself that was to decide whether the USSR was the aggressor or not. The Soviet Ambassador to Germany, N. N. Krestinsky, in a letter to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs dated February 26, 1926, came to the following conclusion after an assessment of the

[14] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VIII., p. 675.
[15] Ibid., p. 750.
[16] Ibid., pp. 814-15.
[17] Ibid., p. 815.
[18] Ibid., p. 816.
[19] Ibid., Vol. IX, Moscow, 1964, p. 21.

arguments in favour of the agreement. "I believe," he wrote, "that the conclusion of the agreement, firstly, reaffirms and strengthens the Rapallo Treaty, doing this after Locarno and thus underlining to the public at large in Germany that Rapallo remains in force. Secondly, clause 3 of the treaty stipulates that the two sides will not enter into hostile economic agreements....

"On the other hand, should we refuse to sign the treaty after the reports that have appeared in the press, despite the secrecy of the talks, that we are negotiating, it would create the impression of a break between us and Germany, while no such break has occurred. The overall impression would be politically unfavourable for us."[20]

The Soviet government found it possible to accept the German wording of Article 2 of the Treaty, but considered that the words "without provocation on its part" should be deleted as "an assumption incompatible with the peaceful policy of the Contracting Parties".[21]

On April 13, 1926, during a conversation with Schubert Krestinsky stated once again that Moscow insists on its amendment to Article 2. "The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs," he said, "hopes that the Germans will not insist on the stipulation concerning provocation, since in effect Herr Schubert agrees with us that for the German side it is only of tactical significance. For us it is not only of tactical significance. The press of the Entente accuses us of Red imperialism and preparation for war. Much the same is often said by Allied statesmen. Should our treaty with Germany contain a provocation clause, our enemies could say that even friendly Germany is compelled to take into account the possibility of a military provocation on our part."[22] Krestinsky also pointed out that should the matter be examined by the League of Nations Council or the International Court in The Hague, both of which were hostile to us, they would of course "be inclined to interpret the clause against us".[23] "It seems to me," he told Schubert at their next meeting, "that our considerations against the provocation clause are much better founded that the arguments compelling the Germans to insist on the clause."[24] The Soviet Ambassador underlined that the objections were not only his personal ones. "Moscow, too, firmly adheres to this view...."[25]

The firm stand taken by the Soviet government resulted in the German government being compelled to abandon its initial wording and agreeing to a compromise. On April 21, 1926, Stresemann

[20] Ibid., pp. 131-32.
[21] Ibid., p. 149.
[22] Ibid., p. 224.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., p. 239.
[25] Ibid., p. 245.

invited Krestinsky and submitted the compromise wording. He suggested deleting the word "unprovoked" and replacing it with "despite its peaceful attitude".

The Soviet Union agreed to this formula and the treaty on neutrality between the USSR and Germany was signed on April 24, 1926.

The Treaty stemmed from the fact that the Rapallo Treaty remained the basis for relations between the USSR and Germany. The two governments undertook "to maintain friendly contacts in order to reach agreement on all political and economic matters concerning the two countries jointly". Article 2 read: "Should one of the Contracting Parties despite its peaceful attitude be attacked by a third party or by several third parties, the other Contracting Party will observe neutrality during the entire duration of the conflict."[26] Article 3 stipulated that neither of the parties should participate in coalitions of third parties directed at an economic or financial boycott of one of the contracting parties.

The signing of the Treaty was accompanied by an exchange of notes that were an integral part of the Treaty. The German Foreign Ministry in its Note addressed to the USSR Ambassador in Germany stated that both sides had discussed the basic issues connected with Germany's joining the League of Nations with an eye to the need to preserve universal peace. "The German government is convinced," the Note stated, "that German membership of the League of Nations cannot serve as an obstacle to the development of friendly relations between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.... Should some members of the League of Nations ... scheme ... unilaterally against the USSR, the German Government would do its utmost to oppose them."[27] The German government stated that the question of sanctions against the USSR could arise only if the Soviet Union were to begin an aggressive war against a third power. It noted that only with the consent of Germany could it be decided whether the Soviet Union had been the aggressor. "Unfounded accusations," the Note continued, "would not be binding on Germany to take part in actions taken on the basis of Article 16".[28] Such a statement on the part of the German government gave a measure of hope that Germany would not be drawn into the anti-Soviet policy of the League of Nations. In 1926 the Soviet Union received for the first time in Germany a comparatively long-term loan of 300 million marks: it was made available by private banks and partially guaranteed by the German government. This last was of no little significance.

In view of the efforts of British diplomacy to knock together a united front against the USSR, the Soviet government deemed it

[26] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IX, p. 251.
[27] Ibid., p. 252.
[28] Ibid., p. 253.

necessary to step up activities designed to conclude non-aggression and neutrality treaties that would prevent their signatories from being drawn into anti-Soviet plans.

The Deputy People's Commissar in a letter to the Soviet Ambassador in Sweden V. S. Dovgalevsky noted in January 1926: "Our policy ... is aimed at the conclusion of individual friendship treaties with all countries. As a counterweight to Locarno and the League of Nations where groups and combinations hostile to each other are set up, we are offering a plan for the abolition of the system of political alliances and groups that inevitably lead to war."[29]

As a first priority, the USSR sought such treaties with its neighbours. In January 1925 the Soviet Ambassador to Poland P. L. Voykov had a meeting with Poland's Foreign Minister Aleksander Skrzynski and on behalf of the Soviet government suggested a Polish-Soviet treaty based on non-aggression and a mutual undertaking not to enter into any combinations, hostile to the other side. It underlined that this could solve the problem of relations between the two countries.[30] The Polish side, however, tried to get out of negotiations on such a pact, claiming that it would be more feasible to begin any settlement with separate issues, such as, for instance, commercial relations, rather than the general principle. The Soviet representative replied that the signing of a non-aggression treaty would pave the way to resolving other issues on a basis of reciprocity.[31]

At the end of January, 1926, the Polish government suggested to the USSR the conclusion of non-aggression pacts not only with Poland, but with several countries simultaneously, i.e., in addition to Poland, with the Baltic states, Finland and Romania. In the subsequent talks Poland continued to insist on its proposal. The Soviet government was aware that the Polish proposal was designed to confront the Soviet Union with a bloc of its neighbours under Poland's leadership. Discussing the matter with the Polish Envoy to the USSR Stanisław Kentżyński, a member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, B. S. Stomonyakov, stated bluntly that "the Polish proposal was a disguised attempt to establish a protectorate over the Baltic states with the organisation of war against us as its ultimate aim. The desire to organise a military alliance against us, which Poland has again lately pushed into the forefront of its policy, rules out any wish to come to an agreement with us on a settlement of bilateral political and economic relations."[32]

The Polish government tried to dissuade the Baltic states from accepting the Soviet proposals for bilateral non-aggression pacts. In a

[29] Ibid., p. 10.
[30] Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 771.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 290.

conversation with the Latvian Envoy to the USSR Ozols, Stomonyakov pointed out that the Soviet side believed Latvia's hesitation to sign a treaty with the USSR was largely due to Poland's actions.[33]

After the treaty on neutrality with Germany was signed in April 1926, the Soviet government decided that that type of treaty should form the basis of its relations with the Baltic states and Poland. It was ready to sign such treaties with other countries too. In May 1926 the Soviet government sent drafts of treaties, drawn up on the pattern of the Soviet-German treaty, to the governments of Latvia and Estonia.

The Soviet proposals were not accepted at that time, because of pressure on the Baltic states from Poland and Britain. But nor was the Polish proposal for a general treaty of guarantee, so the British and Polish attempts to draw the Baltic countries into an anti-Soviet bloc came to nothing.

In March 1926 the Soviet government expressed its desire to speed up the talks with Lithuania on a neutrality pact. This was signed on September 28, 1926. It reaffirmed the provisions of the 1920 peace treaty, with both countries undertaking to respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability and to refrain from aggressive actions against each other. They also undertook not to support a third party or parties which might attack the USSR or Lithuania, despite the peaceful attitudes of the last two.[34]

The USSR's Relations with Its Eastern Neighbours

The countries of the East quite justly saw the Soviet Union as their champion in the struggle against imperialism. That provided a firm foundation for the development of political, economic and cultural ties between the USSR and its eastern neighbours. The Soviet Union sought to widen these ties. In this context it singled out Turkey for special attention, since for many years the two countries had had friendly relations. In Turkey too, as Chicherin pointed out, there was "a shift towards closer ties with us". Chicherin believed this was due to the growing British intrigues against Turkey.[35] He underlined that Britain's hostile policy was making Turkish politicians realise that "only in the Soviet Union could they find a firm bulwark and support for the struggle against the pressure of foreign capital, and chiefly British capital. This realisation is strengthened in Turkey by the friendliness, which we are not only constantly displaying in regard to Turkey, but are actually practicing."[36]

[33] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IX, p. 315.
[34] Ibid., pp. 446-47.
[35] Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 192.
[36] Ibid., p. 193.

In September 1924 the Soviet Ambassador to Turkey Y. Z. Surits proposed during a meeting with the Prime Minister Ismet Pasha to widen the provisions of the Soviet-Turkish treaty of March 16, 1921, in order to strengthen political cooperation. Ismet Pasha on behalf of his government said he was ready to start such negotiations and asked for elucidation of the Soviet proposal. Chicherin immediately instructed Surits to inform the Turkish government that the Soviet Union suggested supplementing the 1921 treaty with an agreement on friendly neutrality in the case of war between one of the signatories and a third power, as well as the undertaking not to participate in hostile groupings directed against the other side.[37]

The talks between the USSR and Turkey were interrupted by the illness of Ismet Pasha and the government crisis in Turkey, but they were resumed in January 1925. The Turkish government at first objected to the Soviet proposal not to join hostile groupings, saying that this would infringe the principle of independence.[38]

The Soviet draft of a treaty was handed over to Turkey at the end of January 1925. While desirous of improving relations with Turkey, the Soviet Union at the same time wished to avoid any complication of the situation in the East. Nor did it want the treaty to be directed against other Eastern countries, and, specifically, Iran. Chicherin wrote to the Soviet Ambassador to Iran, K. K. Yurenev, that the USSR did not "wish to serve as a cover for Turkey's flank, if it attacks Persia".[39] Consequently, in February 1925 the Soviet government offered its good services to the Turkish and Iranian governments in helping to settle all existing misunderstandings between them, stipulating that Article 1 of the draft Soviet-Turkish treaty on friendly neutrality "does not apply in the case of Turkish hostilities against Persia, or vice versa".[40] The Soviet Union stemmed from the belief that war between Turkey and Iran—both of whom suffered equally from British intrigues—should profit Britain alone. What is more, not only was there no radical conflict of interests between Turkey and Iran, but their interests coincided in regard to the struggle against imperialism. "As to any petty misunderstandings between them," Chicherin wrote to Surits, "they can always be resolved peacefully, and we shall never refuse to help them in this".[41]

Turkey took into account the Soviet government's statement and in turn proposed that the USSR and Turkey should advise Iran to conclude guarantee pacts between Turkey and Iran, as well as between the USSR and Iran. These pacts should incorporate undertakings of

[37] Ibid., p. 766.
[38] Ibid., p. 23.
[39] Ibid., p. 396.
[40] Ibid., p. 114.
[41] Ibid.

non-aggression and mutual respect for existing borders.[42] The Soviet government informed the Iranian government of this viewpoint, and in July 1925 the Iranian Ambassador expressed his government's wish to conclude a friendship treaty with Turkey.[43]

A month later the Turkish Foreign Minister told the Soviet Ambassador that he had been authorised by his government to sign a treaty with the USSR.

A last-minute attempt was made by the British government to prevent the signing of a Soviet-Turkish treaty. Turkey's Foreign Minister in November 1925 received an invitation from the Greek government to join the Balkan countries in a common action of adherence to the Locarno agreements.

The Turkish Minister stated emphatically in a conversation with a Soviet representative that "Greece had taken the initiative on instructions from London".[44] Turkey, however, refused to be pressured and rejected the invitation.

After the Locarno agreements were signed, both sides stepped up the negotiations. Turkey was well aware that the Locarno agreements represented a direct threat to it too. On November 21, 1925, the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow made the following statement to the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs on behalf of his own Foreign Ministry: "The significance of Locarno is now quite clear both for the USSR and for Turkey. The Turkish government believes that in view of this, the policies of the Soviet Union and Turkey should be identical."[45] The Soviet representative replied that he fully agreed with the Turkish assessment of the Locarno agreements and that Locarno required a rapprochement between the countries against which it was directed. "We should like to strengthen still further our friendship with the countries of the East, and primarily with Turkey...," he said. "I think the time is ripe to give material, of rather legal, form to this desire. Specifically, I mean, it is time to sign the supplementary agreement we have been negotiating for almost a year."[46]

The Treaty on Non-Aggression and Neutrality was signed between the two countries on December 17, 1925. Under this treaty, should one of the signatories be the target of military action of one or more third parties, the other signatory pledged to observe neutrality. The two sides also undertook to refrain from any attack on each other and not to participate in any alliance, political agreement or hostile action with one or more third parties directed against the other side. The Treaty marked a new improvement in relations between the USSR and Turkey. The

[42] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VIII, p. 402.
[43] Ibid., p. 461.
[44] Ibid., p. 668.
[45] Ibid., p. 675.
[46] Ibid., p. 676.

Soviet side attached great significance to the Treaty. In a letter to the Politburo of the CC of the Soviet Communist Party Chicherin wrote that "the treaty signed with Turkey in Paris on neutrality, non-aggression and non-participation in hostile combinations represents a model of peaceful policies designed to promote friendly relations".[47]

On the significance of the Treaty for Turkey he wrote to Surits: "... Our pact has offered Turkey prospects for the settlement of relations with countries that threaten it. Indeed, Turkish policy has lately been directed to settlements of Turkey's relations with its neighbours which are patterned on the Soviet-Turkish pact of December 17...."[48]

The strengthening of political relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey went hand in hand with the development of economic ties. The Soviet government gave Turkish merchants permission to bring certain Turkish goods into the USSR without license and also to take out certain Soviet goods. Soviet-Turkish trade advanced still more rapidly following the first treaty on trade between the two countries in 1927. That was also the first ever Soviet trade treaty with an Asian country.

Soviet-Afghan relations were doing well too. A treaty on neutrality and mutual non-aggression on the pattern of the Soviet-Turkish treaty[49] was signed between them on August 31, 1926. It however included additional commitments, that were absent from the Soviet-Turkish treaty, but which took into account the special forms in which imperialism manifested itself in Central Asia. Article 2 of the Soviet-Afghan treaty stipulated that each side would oppose the hostile behaviour of third parties in regard to each other. This provision was incorporated in the 1931 Soviet-Afghan treaty, which was prolonged in 1936, 1955 and then in December 1975, and operates to this day. What is more, the treaty took into accout the national-political situation on the borders of the Soviet Union in Central Asia and included an article saying that the two sides would each refrain from any armed or non-armed interference in the internal affairs of the other and would prevent any activities on their territory directed against the other side, specifically, the recruitment of troops against it and the transit of armed forces, weapons, ammunition and other military materiel designed for use against it.

As a result of the 1926 treaty, political relations between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan were further consolidated and benefited both countries.

[47] Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 7.

[48] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Chicherin's letter to the Soviet Ambassador to Turkey, May 17, 1926.

[49] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IX, pp. 406-08; L. B. Teplinsky, *50 Years of Soviet-Afghan Relations*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 59-62 (in Russian).

Hand in hand with the development of political relations between the two countries, their trade and economic ties also advanced. The special geographical position of Afghanistan and its closeness to Soviet borders, the quickness of delivery and low freight costs were all factors making for the development of Soviet-Afghan trade. An important feature of this trade was that the Soviet Union bought all Afghan export items, which tended to stimulate their output, while Soviet industry could satisfy a considerable slice of Afghan consumer demand. The volume of trade grew from year to year; from 1.4 million roubles in 1923/24 to 18.5 million roubles in 1928/29[50] with the balance being constantly in Afghanistan's favour.

A number of special measures taken by the Soviet government were also responsible for the expansion of Afghan exports to the USSR. Specifically, no license was required for the import of the principal Afghan commodities, while most others were allowed in without tariffs or with reduced tariffs. In November 1928 an agreement on an air line between Kabul and Tashkent was signed.

Friendly Soviet-Afghan relations were also strengthened by the visit to the Soviet Union in May 1928 of King Amanullah Khan of Afghanistan. Talks were begun during this visit on a trade treaty and an agreement on the transit of Afghan goods through Soviet territory.

The friendly relations between the USSR and Iran likewise grew stronger. The imperialist powers, and especially Britain, attached special significance to Iran in their plans for encircling the USSR. The British imperialists sought to hinder Soviet-Iranian relations and disrupt their close economic ties so as to deprive Iran of the possibility of leaning on its northern neighbour and, thereby, enshackle it still more strongly. To this end, British agents in Northern Iran tried to organise a boycott of Soviet goods. Britain's anti-Soviet intrigues in Iran were matched by those of the United States.

In the summer of 1925 the Soviet Union invited Iran to sign a treaty similar to the Soviet-Turkish one. The Shah of Iran Reza Khan replied on July 24 that he was pleased by the Soviet Union's kind intentions, but asked for a postponement "in order to prepare a favourable atmosphere by resolving old issues".[51] What the Iranian government feared, as it said, was that the conclusion of an Iranian-Soviet treaty would arouse British displeasure, and "as a result, Britain would demand some compensations for itself".[52]

The Soviet government, however, did not lose hope of a pact with Iran. In a letter to the Politburo of the CC of the Soviet Communist Party on January 2, 1926, Chicherin wrote: "... It would seem useful to continue the probing begun by Comrade Yurenev [Soviet Ambassa-

[50] *Soviet-Afghan Relations, 1919-1969*, Moscow, 1971, p. 75 (in Russian).
[51] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VIII, p. 449.
[52] Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 7.

dor to Iran—*Ed.*] and, if it proves favourable, to conclude with Persia a pact similar to that with Turkey."[53] The Politburo approved this proposal, and on January 7 Chicherin instructed the Soviet representative in Iran to continue the talks: "It has been recognised as desirable that a treaty be concluded with Persia along the lines of the Soviet-Turkish one, i.e., on neutrality, non-aggression and non-participation in hostile political and economic combinations, agreements or blocs. Keep us constantly informed of any progress on this matter."[54]

In January 1926 the Iranian government accepted the Soviet-Turkish Treaty on Neutrality and Non-Aggression as the basis for negotiations.

The talks between the USSR and Iran took place in Moscow in August-October 1926. By the beginning of October the two sides had agreed on the articles of the treaty dealing with guarantees and neutrality, as well as on the texts of trade and other economic agreements. But under pressure from forces hostile to the USSR inside Iran and the British Mission in Teheran, the Iranian government again delayed examination of these drafts. The Iranian Foreign Minister had promised the British government that the agreements drafted in Moscow would not be signed. The Iranian government recalled its representative and suggested that the talks be re-located to Teheran. The Soviet government agreed to signing in Teheran the texts drafted in Moscow, but without any additional discussions. The adjourned talks were finally continued in Moscow and on October 1, 1927, ended with the signing of a treaty on guarantees and neutrality, as well as trade and other economic agreements based on the drafts agreed on during the Moscow talks in August-October 1926.[55] The treaty reaffirmed the 1921 Soviet-Iranian treaty. A protocol signed at the same time noted that the Iranian government had no international commitments contradicting the treaty and would assume no such commitments while the treaty was in force.[56] The two governments also exchanged notes regulating trade relations and creating better opportunities for their development.

The treaties concluded in 1926-27 with Germany, Lithuania, Turkey, Afghanistan and Iran testified that Soviet diplomacy had largely succeeded in paralysing the intrigues of the British and American imperialists in most countries neighbouring on the USSR, and specifically in the Asian countries. The ruling circles in Afghanistan, Turkey and Iran justly regarded participation in an anti-Soviet bloc as contrary to their national interests. They felt it could only increase their dependence on British and American imperialism—the worst

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., p. 15.

[55] Ibid., p. 712.

[56] Ibid., Vol. X, Moscow, 1965, p. 400.

enemies of the Eastern peoples' independence and freedom. The peoples of the East were convinced that the Soviet Union was their most reliable pillar in the struggle for complete political and economic liberation. The neighbouring Asian countries had correctly assessed the Soviet policy of peace and liberation of the peoples, and 1925-27 marked the further strengthening of ties between the USSR and its neighbours in the Near and Middle East.

The growth of Soviet prestige among the peoples of the East and the emergence of a national liberation movement in the colonial and dependent countries caused the imperialists to step up their activities against the Soviet Union.

The Aggravation and Break in Soviet-British Relations

1925-26 saw a sharp aggravation in relations between Britain and the Soviet Union. The Conservative government was clearly bent on creating a network of political and military alliances.

Germany was assigned an important role in the anti-Soviet plans of British imperialism, and so London did its utmost to spoil the relations between Germany and the USSR, and thus isolate the Soviet Union. Chicherin in a letter to the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin Krestinsky on August 30, 1925, wrote: "The idea of special overtures to Germany in order to bring it closer to the Entente and tear it away from the USSR belongs to the British government, and especially to the Churchill wing inside it, which is growing stronger. The main idea of British policy, or rather of the Churchill wing, which is gaining the upper hand, is to isolate the USSR."[57] The pretext British ruling circles chose for launching new attacks on the Soviet state was the help given by the Soviet people to the British workers during the general strike in Britain and the miners' strike that began on May 1, 1926.

Like the working people of the whole world, the Soviet workers, prompted by feelings of proletarian solidarity, gave considerable material and moral support to the striking miners. The Presidium of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions called on all union members in the country to donate part of their wages to the British workers. Between May 1926 and March 1, 1927, 16 million roubles were contributed to this fund.[58] The money was handed over to the miners' federation in Britain.

In June 1926 the British government sent the Soviet government a Note accusing it of interference in Britain's internal affairs. It alleged that the money given to the TUC General Council had come from the

[57] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from G. V. Chicherin to the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, August 30, 1925.

[58] *Pravda*, May 16, 1927.

Soviet government, not the Soviet trade unions. The Soviet government rejected the British Note and declared that it had never sent any money to the striking British workers, that the money had come from the Soviet trade unions, and the Soviet government could not interfere in their right "to dispose of funds belonging to them or money especially collected for this purpose".[59] The Soviet government also pointed out that the rights of workers' trade unions were likewise recognised, albeit in a curtailed form, in all the West European countries. In the Soviet Union trade union rights were guaranteed by the state system and the form of political power.[60]

The Soviet government underlined that both countries needed normal relations and it was desirous of maintaining them in every way, especially the broad development of trade. At the same time it underlined that it would under no circumstances allow the interests of the Soviet Union to be infringed, nor would it agree to any concessions on disputed issues, which British ruling circles hoped to win by threatening to break off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

In order to help normalise Soviet-British relations, the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in London suggested in July 1926 that should any misunderstandings arise or incidents occur, the two sides should exchange views with an eye to eliminating them. He also stressed the desirability of resolving all the outstanding issues between the USSR and Britain. Britain's Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, however, turned down this proposal as unfulfillable.[61]

The Soviet Ambassador to Britain Krasin returned to London after a long illness in the autumn of 1926. Chicherin wrote to him on October 8: "I am happy to hear that you are returning to work, and especially, to your well-known efforts in London.... For the Soviet Union the situation at present is a very bad one, but your contacts in London and the sympathies you enjoy will, to some extent, make things easier for you. Do not hurry, ... take care of yourself.... As in the past I shall follow your efforts and speeches with the keenest interest and comradely sympathy."[62]

In the last few weeks of his life (Krasin died in London in November 1926) he established contacts with many British politicians and diplomats, as well as prominent bankers, bringing up the question of an improvement in Soviet-British relations. In a conversation with Chamberlain, Krasin said: "The Soviet government attaches today, as it has in the past, great significance to establishing more normal relations with Britain. When I was leaving Moscow for London, I was instructed by my government to make every effort to improve the

[59] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IX, p. 305.
[60] Ibid., p. 327.
[61] Ibid., p. 733.
[62] Ibid., p. 489.

existing relations and find ways for the possible resumption of talks on a comprehensive agreement covering all disputed issues and on establishing genuinely friendly and sincere relations between the two countries."[63]

On behalf of the Soviet government Krasin raised the question of the Soviet Union receiving long-term credits in the form of loans in Britain, which would allow it to increase several times over its orders to British industry. Although Chamberlain assured the Soviet representative that the British government had no hostile intentions in regard to the Soviet Union, and would welcome any step towards improving relations, he again repeated the unwarranted accusations that the Soviet Union was violating the Soviet-British trade agreement by waging anti-British propaganda. Chamberlain likewise insisted on Soviet recognition of the debts of the tsarist and Provisional governments. In these circumstances it was, naturally, hard to expect an improvement in British-Soviet relations, and all the more so because towards the end of 1926 the anti-Soviet campaign in Britain had assumed vast proportions.

The Conservative Party Conference in Scarborough in October 1926 adopted a resolution calling for the immediate abrogation of the Soviet-British trade agreement, the closing of all Soviet offices on British territory and the expulsion of all their employees. The anti-Soviet campaign was initiated by Churchill, at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer. He urged the British government to follow the United States model in relations with the USSR: its policy of non-recognition. *The Daily Telegraph* on June 21, 1926, quoted him as saying: "I have always thought the United States policy toward Bolshevik Russia a right one." Chamberlain officially confirmed that in opposing the preservation of relations with the Soviet Union, Churchill was speaking on behalf of the government.

Despite the sharp anti-Soviet attacks of members of the British government, the Soviet government continued to work persistently for normal relations with Britain and the expansion of trade and economic ties. Chicherin told newsmen in Berlin on December 6, 1926, that "our government has always invited Britain to come to an agreement, and it continues to do this, but always without success".[64] The Soviet government put forward concrete proposals for widening the economic ties with Britain. In February 1927 the director of Textilsyndicate (the Soviet organisation trading in textile goods) announced that the Soviet Union was proposing to increase its orders to British industry over the next five years, and had allocated 14 million pounds sterling for this purpose.[65]

[63] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. IX, p. 500.

[64] Ibid., p. 565.

[65] *The Manchester Guardian*, February 10, 1927.

Somewhat earlier, in December 1926, the Soviet government brought up before the Foreign Office the question of British and Soviet diplomatic representatives in third countries working together. In January 1927 the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in London was instructed to do everything to avoid a break in diplomatic relations between the USSR and Britain.[66]

At the same time the Soviet government took steps to ensure that the public in Britain and other European countries knew who was really responsible for the deterioration in Anglo-Soviet relations.

In February 1927 reports appeared in the British press that the British government had prepared a note accusing the USSR of interference in China's internal affairs and violation of the 1921 Anglo-Soviet trade agreement and warning the Soviet Union of an impending denunciation of the trade agreement.

Chicherin wrote at that time: "No matter in what country of the world there is unrest or internal social strife, this is invariably construed by our opponents as engineered by invented Soviet agents and financed by invented Soviet gold....

"We reject emphatically the accusations of our opponents who ascribe aggressive plans to us. The Soviet government has stated repeatedly and substantiated with facts that its foreign policy is a policy of peace. Our efforts are concentrated on constructive work inside the country, for which we need peaceful relations with all foreign countries, security for the USSR, and the unhampered development of economic relations with other countries.... This is the policy of peace and of advancing normal relations with all states that our Government is steadfastly pursuing, and it corresponds also to the interests of the broadest working masses in all countries."[67]

In these difficult circumstances, the Soviet government decided to get in ahead of the British side and publicly explain who was to blame for the worsening of Anglo-Soviet relations. A statement on the matter was issued by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on February 4, 1927. It underlined that the USSR was guided by "the interests of universal peace and of preserving friendly relations between the two countries".[68] The statement described as ridiculous the attempts of the British government and British politicians to attribute the greatest national liberation movement of the multimillion Chinese people to "machinations of Soviet agents". At the same time the statement spoke of the Soviet people's profound sympathies for the Chinese national liberation movement. "The Soviet government," it

[66] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Britain, January 15, 1927.

[67] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Draft Interview of G. V. Chicherin, August 18, 1927.

[68] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. X, p. 42.

said, "has never made a secret of its sympathies for the Chinese people's liberation movement, but it does not follow that it should have recommended, or did advise the Canton government to aggravate relations with Britain...."[69] The Soviet government also drew the attention of the British government to the fact that Britain's positions in the East would not be strengthened by its mounting hostility to the USSR.

Chicherin made a statement on Anglo-Soviet relations at a meeting of the CEC USSR in response to questions from a number of CEC members. He underlined that the British government's unwarranted accusations that the Soviet Union was violating the 1921 treaty ran counter to generally accepted diplomatic practice and did nothing to improve the international situation in Europe.

In a Note on February 23, 1927, the British government without any proof accused the Soviet government of violating the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement. The Note failed to cite a single fact that could confirm that the Soviet Union had failed to fulfill its obligations. It only referred to speeches by individual Soviet political figures and articles in the Soviet press sympathetic to China.

The Soviet Union replied on February 26, 1927, with a Note that proved the unfoundedness of the British accusations. It pointed out that no agreement restricting freedom of press and speech in each of the countries existed between them. The Soviet government had not undertaken to demand from its citizens that they should praise or not criticise the social and political system in Britain or the capitalist countries in general. At the same time the Soviet government made another attempt to avoid the complication of Anglo-Soviet relations. It reaffirmed the statement of the late Soviet Ambassador to London, Krasin, on the desirability of eliminating all existing difficulties between the two countries and causes for mutual complaints, and of establishing quite normal relations. The Soviet government declared that it would continue to pursue its peaceful foreign policy in which there was no room for any aggressiveness towards other countries.[70]

In commenting on the Soviet reply, *Pravda* pointed out that "the Soviet government had shown the greatest restraint and exceptional peacefulness by stressing again and again its full readiness to examine and eliminate all misunderstandings, conflicts, etc."[71]

The impact of the Soviet reply on the British public was very considerable. Even the bourgeois papers underlined that the Soviet Note was marked by a spirit of cooperation and left the door open for further negotiations.[72] On March 4, 1927, during a meeting with

[69] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. X, pp. 42-43.

[70] Ibid., p. 60.

[71] *Pravda*, February 27, 1927.

[72] *Westminster Gazette*, February 28, 1927.

the Labour leader MacDonald, the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires was told that Chamberlain's note was very weak, while the Soviet reply was very good.[73]

British ruling circles understood that conditions were not yet ripe for severing relations with the USSR. So they stepped up their anti-Soviet propaganda, their slander campaign, and most of all their efforts to forge a united front of the capitalist countries against the Soviet Union.

In this campaign of the British reactionaries against the Soviet Union a major role was assigned to China, where the revolution was advancing rapidly. In March 1927 the imperialists resorted to open armed intervention against the Chinese people in order to stamp out the revolution. At the same time, the British imperialists decided to provoke a raid of reactionary forces on the Soviet Embassy in China, cause dissension between the Chinese and Soviet peoples and thereby kill a number of birds at one go: weaken Soviet foreign policy positions, make it more difficult for the USSR to support the Chinese people, and deal another blow to the Chinese revolution.

On April 6, 1927, armed police and soldiers of the Peking government broke into the Soviet Embassy in Peking, searched it and arrested a number of diplomats. The raid was organised with the knowledge and approval of the British and American governments. British officers took part in the raid. Something like a platoon of British soldiers were in the vicinity of the Soviet Embassy during the raid.[74] Provocatory raids were also made on Soviet consulates in Shanghai and Tientsin. Stimson, an American who had been appointed adviser to the Peking dictator Chang Tso-ling later published an account of his interview with the Chinese leader who said the following: "I was assured that if I could get the necessary proof at the Soviet Embassy, Britain would take action."[75] The United States backed the British actions. According to press reports, the American Minister in Peking John Mac Murry had helped to organise the raid on the Soviet Embassy.[76]

The purpose of the provocations against Soviet diplomatic offices in China was to spark off a serious conflict between the Peking government and the USSR. On instructions from British politicians, documents purporting to prove Soviet interference in China were forged and then claimed to have been "found" during the raids. In this way the British government sought to create a suitable climate for a break with the Soviet Union, and, should circumstances be favourable, also for a new anti-Soviet intervention.

[73] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. X, p. 72.

[74] *Pravda*, May 7, 1927.

[75] *Krasnaya Zvezda*, July 26, 1927.

[76] *China Weekly Review*, April 16, 1927.

The raids aroused strong indignation among wide sections of the Chinese people. The paper *Mingkuo jihpao* voiced general public opinion when it described the raids on Soviet diplomatic offices as unprecedented in international relations; it pointed out that many imperialist countries had joined forces on the world arena to fight against Soviet Russia.[77] The Foreign Minister of the Wuhan revolutionary government in China sent Chicherin a telegram condemning the raid on the embassy as a monstrous crime and expressing his deep regret over the incident to the Soviet government.[78]

The Deputy People's Commissar in a Note delivered to the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires in the USSR, Cheng Yang-shin, classified the raid organised by the Peking authorities as an unheard of violation of the norms of international law and insisted on the fulfilment of a number of elementary conditions: the removal of the Chinese military unit and police from the premises of the Soviet Embassy and Trade Mission, the immediate release of arrested staff of the Soviet Embassy and other Soviet institutions, and the return of all documents, property, money and other articles taken from the embassy or Soviet staff. "The Soviet Government," the Note said, "is fully aware that irresponsible foreign imperialist circles are trying to provoke the USSR into a war. The Soviet Government is equally well aware that the Peking Cabinet has become a tool in the hands of foreign imperialist circles." "The Soviet Government," the Note concluded, "does not doubt that in its desire for peace it will find wide support from the working masses of all countries, including—and first and foremost—from the peoples of China and the USSR."[79]

The British ruling circles expected the USSR to send its troops against the North Chinese militarist Chang Tso-ling who was directly responsible for the raid on the Soviet Embassy in Peking. By pushing the Soviet Union into a war in the East they wanted to kill two birds with one stone: to compromise it in the eyes of the Chinese working people and to weaken its armed forces on the western borders which would have made it an easy target for bourgeois-landlord Poland and boyar-ruled Romania. The Soviet government saw through their designs, so the British and US imperialists' plans fell through.

Hostile activities against the USSR the British government did not stop at engineering a Chinese-Soviet conflict. At home too British imperialism continued preparations for a break with the USSR. To this end the British government decided to raid the London premises of ARCOS.[80] Among those who were informed of the coming raid

[77] *Mingkuo jihpao*, April 8, 1927.

[78] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. X, p. 152.

[79] Ibid., pp. 151-52.

[80] ARCOS—the Anglo-Russian Cooperative Society set up to regulate trade between the USSR and Britain.

were the Home Secretary Hicks, the Foreign Secretary Chamberlain, the Prime Minister Baldwin,[81] and also Churchill.[82] Turkey's Foreign Minister Tevfik R. Aras told the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Turkey V. P. Potyomkin that the ARCOS raid had been prepared "by the British government in advance and was directly linked with the raid on the embassy in Peking".[83]

The signal for the start of the provocation was given by Birkenhead, Chief of the Indian Office, and one of the most reactionary politicians in Britain. On May 6, 1927, he called for the breaking off of relations with the Soviet Union. A bitter enemy of communism and the Soviet Union, he insisted that "the battle in front of us is to defeat communism, Moscow".[84] On May 12, 1927, the premises of ARCOS and the Soviet Trade Delegation were taken over without any legal excuse by an armed unit of British police. The police search of the building continued right up to May 16. Soviet diplomats on the ARCOS premises were unlawfully detained, and some members of the trade delegation were beaten up. During the raid and in the absence of Soviet staff, the police typed certain documents using ARCOS letterheads. *Pravda* in an editorial headed "Another Forgery" wrote: "All this gives grounds for believing that the police raided ARCOS not to find compromising documents, but to forge such documents."[85]

The raid and search of the premises of the Soviet Trade Delegation was a gross violation of the Anglo-Soviet agreement of April 16, 1921. Quite naturally no compromising documents were found during the search, since none existed. Subsequently the British government made public the documents it claimed to have found in ARCOS, which in its view could compromise the USSR. But after their publication it became clear that the accusations made by the British ruling circles were totally unfounded. Not for nothing did the British government refuse to turn the documents over to a parliamentary commission for inspection as the Labour opposition had demanded.

The Soviet government realised that things were moving towards a break in diplomatic relations. It closely watched the actions of the British ruling circles. Several months before the ARCOS raid in January 1927 F. A. Rotstein, member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, wrote to the Soviet Ambassador to Britain: "My impression is that you will shortly have to start packing your bags. I believe the British government will bring to a

[81] *Parliamentary Debates. House of Commons, 1927,* Vol. 206, Col. 915.

[82] *Pravda,* May 15, 1927.

[83] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the USSR Chargé d'Affaires in Turkey and the Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik R. Aras, May 1927.

[84] *The Times,* May 7, 1927.

[85] *Pravda,* May 17, 1927.

head the crisis in our relations this coming spring."[86]

Following the ARCOS raid, the Deputy People's Commissar in a letter to the Soviet Ambassador in London noted that "from all the contradictory information ... one conclusion seems inescapable, that Anglo-Soviet relations will not remain as they were and that changes will inevitably be made in them".[87]

The Soviet government, however, made one more attempt to avert a break by pointing out to Britain that such action would damage Britain itself. In its note of protest of May 17, 1927, the Soviet government declared that it could not tolerate that its foreign trade operations "should be made dependent on casual combinations within British parties, or on election manoeuvres".[88] It asked the British government whether it wanted to preserve and develop Anglo-Soviet relations, making it quite clear that these relations could develop only if Britain abided implicitly by its treaty obligations. The British government, however, clearly was unwilling to ensure the necessary conditions for the operation of the Soviet Trade Delegation, nor did it intend to observe the 1921 agreement.[89]

At that time the Soviet government, in a decision on foreign trade designed to ensure the unimpeded growth of exports and imports, instructed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade to conduct operations, as a rule, in countries with which normal diplomatic relations existed, and in which Soviet offices were ensured the proper conditions for commercial operations. The British government, however, did not heed these sensible warnings. On May 27, 1927, Chamberlain handed the Soviet representative a Note stating that the British government was breaking off diplomatic relations with the USSR and annulling the 1921 trade agreement.[90] The British government attributed this break to Soviet propaganda. But even among bourgeois circles in Britain there were few who believed this story. *The Manchester Guardian*, for one, commented: "The real reason why we broke off relations with Russia is that the Russian Government is Communist, not that we feared the effects of Communist propaganda in this country."[91]

The Soviet government in its reply handed to the British government on May 28, 1927, categorically rejected "all the accusations of any violation of the 1921 trade agreement as wholly unfounded and

[86] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from a member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador to Britain, January 1927.

[87] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives, Letter from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador in London, May 1927.

[88] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. X, p. 218.

[89] Ibid., pp. 213-18.

[90] Ibid., p. 248.

[91] *The Manchester Guardian*, December 6, 1927.

without proof".[92] "The peoples of the Soviet Union and their Government," the Note declared, "have no hostile feelings to the peoples of the British Empire with whom they desire to maintain normal and friendly relations. That desire is, undoubtedly, reciprocated by the peoples of the British Empire. But such relations have not been desired, nor are they desired now, by the present British Government, which from its first days in office has sought to keep relations with the USSR in a state of constant tension, and to aggravate them further."[93]

The British ruling circles hoped to achieve the political and economic isolation of the Soviet Union through the break in relations. They hoped to strengthen the economic and financial boycott, and, if possible, pave the way to intervention against the Soviet Union.

Shortly after the severance of Anglo-Soviet relations, the bourgeois press abroad launched a bitter anti-Soviet campaign, which the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin described as a "moral united front against Soviet Russia".[94]

The Executive Committee of the Comintern, meeting for its Eighth Plenary Session in May 1927, branded as malicious acts designed to provoke war the raid on the Soviet Embassy in Peking carried out by Chang Tso-ling on instructions from London and with the support of the diplomatic corps of all the capitalist governments, the attack on the Soviet Trade Delegation in London and the break in relations with the USSR that followed.[95]

The international position of the USSR was also discussed at a joint plenary meeting of the CC and the Central Control Commission of the Soviet Communist Party at the beginning of August, 1927.[96] It named the danger of a counter-revolutionary war against the USSR and the aggravation of the contradictions between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries that encircled it as the most acute problem, but at the same time it did not rule out the possibility of an era of improved relations with certain capitalist countries beginning. Specifically, it noted that in Central Europe Germany was opposing the anti-Soviet ventures being prepared by British imperialism and was displaying interest in maintaining normal relations with the USSR and developing trade and economic ties with it. Italy, too, was showing keen interest in advancing trade with the USSR. Unlike the members of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition who stressed the inevi-

[92] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. X, p. 245.

[93] Ibid., p. 246.

[94] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Draft Interview of G. V. Chicherin, August 18, 1927.

[95] *Communist International in Documents, 1919-1932*, Moscow, 1933, p. 699 (in Russian).

[96] *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 3, p. 463.

tability of a military clash between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries, the true Leninists believed a war could be avoided. They argued convincingly and on a principled basis that it was essential to take advantage of the factors that could deter military action on the part of the capitalist countries and prevent or postpone war. Chicherin, when arguing with the Trotskyists at the plenum on how to assess the international position of the USSR, insisted that the anti-Soviet intrigues of Britain could be foiled and pointed to the concrete factors Soviet diplomacy should utilise to prevent war.[97]

In its decisions the plenum named as the factors that could help avert war "first and foremost, the working class in the capitalist countries fighting against an imperialist war, and to some extent the pacifist-minded petty-bourgeoisie who feared war. What is more," the decision of the plenum noted, "the bourgeoisie realises that war against the USSR would, undoubtedly, sooner or later, unleash all the forces of world revolution, and that cannot fail to have a certain deterring effect on a decision as to when imperialism should attack the USSR."[98]

The plenum also noted in its decisions the need for the Soviet Union to take vigorous steps to preserve peace. It underlined the big role that developing economic ties between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries could have on preventing war. "In the struggle to promote peace," the plenum stressed, "the Soviet government should agree to economically feasible ties with the capitalist countries."[99] The Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs defined the following tasks in the prevailing situation: "In the economic field the situation requires that we immediately seek to maintain and increase the interest in trade shown by countries with which we have normal relations. Primary attention should be paid to Italy. I should strongly recommend placing a number of big orders in Italy without awaiting new credit offers. The same should be done in France and the Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden. The distribution of orders between the various countries, within the limits of our imports plan, should be revised ... from the point of view of the existing political situation."[100]

The 15th Communist Party Congress in the resolution approving the Central Committee's political and organisational work underlined that "the contradictions had increased between the Soviet Union and the bourgeois countries surrounding it, but the USSR's victorious

[97] CPA IML. Minutes of the Joint Plenary Meeting of the CC and CCC CPSU (B), August 1927.

[98] *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 3, pp. 466-67.

[99] Ibid., p. 467.

[100] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the CC CPSU (B), June 16, 1927.

advance was undermining the foundations of world capitalist domination."[101] The resolution also noted that "the reactionary elements among the world bourgeoisie, under the leadership of the Conservative government in London, have begun preparing the ground for an armed attack on the USSR and have enmeshed it in a ball of provocations."[102]

The British bourgeoisie always looked for someone else to pull the chestnuts out of the fire. In this case, too, it sought to get other countries, especially those neighbouring on the Soviet Union, to set up an anti-Soviet bloc and push them into a war against the USSR. However, this latest attempt of British reactionaries to organise an anti-Soviet bloc also failed.

Britain Fails to Draw Poland, France and Germany into an Anti-Soviet Bloc

After the severance of diplomatic relations with the USSR, British ruling circles shifted their foreign policy efforts to provoking a war between the USSR and its neighbours.

First and foremost, the British reactionary circles concentrated on drawing Poland into an anti-Soviet bloc. In order to provoke a Polish-Soviet war, the Soviet ambassador to Poland P. L. Voykov was foully murdered on June 7, 1927. His assassin was a Russian white-guard B. Koverda, a Polish citizen. *Pravda* described Voykov as "the victim of the struggle for peace that the Soviet government and its diplomats were so patiently and assiduously carrying on".[103] The murder of the Soviet diplomat aroused the deep indignation of progressive circles in many countries. Several hundreds of thousands of people took part in protest demonstrations and meetings in Moscow. A government statement issued on June 9 cited irrefutable facts showing that the real organisers of the assassination were the French and British imperialists. The Polish working class also saw Voykov's murder as an attempt to provoke a war against the Soviet Union. The CC of the Polish Communist Party in a message to the CC of the Soviet Communist Party said that the crime committed in Warsaw would "strengthen the Polish working class's deep affection for the motherland of the world proletariat—the Soviet Union—and would promote the struggle against the threat of imperialist war and against Pilsudski's fascist dictatorship".[104] The 4th Congress of the Polish Communist Party, held in the summer of 1927, underlined in

[101] *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1970, p. 14.
[102] Ibid., p. 15.
[103] *Pravda*, June 12, 1927.
[104] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. X, p. 640.

its resolution that active defence of the Soviet Union was the Party's most important task.[105] The British ruling circles did all they could to fan the conflict which had arisen as a result of the assassination of the Soviet ambassador. But Pilsudski's government could not ignore the Polish public's indignation over the murder. So it expressed its regret and officially condemned the crime committed on June 7.

For its part the Soviet government tried to prevent a further aggravation of Soviet-Polish relations. It steadfastly upheld the interests of the Soviet Union, but at the same time limited itself to the most elementary and essential demands for an extensive investigation of the crime, the speedy and strict punishment of those responsible, and the discontinuation on Polish territory of the operations of whiteguard organisations directed against the USSR. It was largely due to the Soviet Union's peaceful policy that the conflict between the two countries did not sharpen, which made it more difficult for Britain to provoke a Polish-Soviet war.

Equally unsuccessful were Britain's attempts to draw Germany into an anti-Soviet bloc. The German government realised that participation in such a bloc would be to Germany's disadvantage. The Soviet government took initiative in strengthening cooperation with Germany. A number of meetings and conversations took place between German and Soviet political figures and diplomats. The Soviet representatives set out to show Germany that Britain was trying to use other countries to fight the Soviet Union, and as a result it was these other countries that would be the losers, while Britain alone stood to gain.

When Chicherin met the German Foreign Minister Stresemann in June 1927, he underlined the very great significance that Germany's stand would have for peace in Europe. Stresemann for his part assured Chicherin that "Germany's attitude to the USSR remained unchanged"[106] and that Germany would oppose any attempts of the Western powers to violate its neutrality, specifically, it would not allow foreign troops to cross its territory. He declared that Germany would oppose this with all the resources at its command.[107] Chicherin gave Stresemann to understand that Britain's actions had created for Germany long-term favourable conditions. "Our trade will be directed to other countries instead of Britain and this will increase trade with Germany," he said.[108]

Nor did Britain succeed in pulling France into an anti-Soviet bloc or in persuading it to sever diplomatic relations with the USSR.

[105] J. Radopolski, *Poland Prepares for War*, Moscow, 1929, p. 109 (in Russian).
[106] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. X, p. 303.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid., p. 305.

Franco-British talks held in London in May 1927, considered joint action against the USSR. But French politicians refused to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Britain and to sacrifice their economic and political ties with the Soviet Union, so they were in no hurry to tie themselves down with commitments to Britain.

On May 24, 1927, Chicherin met the French Foreign Minister Briand. Commenting on the Anglo-Soviet conflict, Chicherin remarked that "the pacifying role now belongs to France and that the British offensive creates a highly disturbing overall situation".[109] Briand replied by categorically stating that "France remains uncommitted. It has its own Russian policy and will not take Britain's side in the conflict. It will seek to preserve peace".[110] Chicherin drew attention to Poland's special significance and the need to restrain it from any ventures. Briand replied that France had in the past restrained Poland and would continue to do so.[111]

A meeting of the French Council of Ministers on September 17, 1927, decided "that there was nothing at present warranting the severance of diplomatic relations" with the USSR.[112]

This meant that French politicians, unlike their British counterparts, had made a sober assessment of the significance of normal relations with the Soviet Union. They refused to support Britain's policy of breaking off relations with the Soviet Union.

Soviet ties with the countries of the East were also expanding. A treaty of friendship and trade was signed between the USSR and Yemen on November 1, 1928.

Soviet Struggle for Disarmament

Disarmament had for a long time been one of the goals proclaimed by the Soviet government on Lenin's initiative, and, in view of the mounting threat of war, it expressed its desire to take part in the work of the Commission preparing for a disarmament conference.

The Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in a letter to the Soviet Ambassador in London wrote in January 1926: "Our participation in the conference is a settled matter.... We attach such great significance to promoting disarmament and saving the broad working masses from the present economic hardships that we are prepared to disregard that negative factor that the initiative came from the League of Nations, which we and other countries

[109] Ibid., p. 231.

[110] Ibid., p. 231.

[111] Ibid., p. 234.

[112] Y. V. Borisov, *Soviet-French Relations (1924-1945)*, Moscow, 1964, p. 79 (in Russian).

do not recognise."[113]

The Preparatory Commission was set up by the League of Nations Council in December 1925, and included representatives from 21 countries, among them Britain, France, the United States and the Soviet Union. Geneva was chosen as its meeting place. The Soviet government had been in conflict with Switzerland since the assassination of Vorovsky, and it therefore did not attend the first three sessions of the Commission. "The League of Nations," wrote the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, "deliberately removed us from participation in the conference by ignoring our well-known attitude to Switzerland."[114]

The 4th session opened on November 30, 1927, and continued until December 3. The world democratic public looked forward eagerly to the statement that was to be made by the Soviet representative. On behalf of the Soviet government, the leader of the Soviet delegation Litvinov read out a declaration in which the Soviet Union suggested that the Preparatory Commission should examine the question of general and total disarmament. The comprehensive Soviet programme for general and total disarmament envisaged the abolition of all armed forces, the destruction of all weapons, ammunition, means of chemical warfare and other means of extermination, the abolition of all naval and air forces, the destruction of fortresses, naval and air bases, the disbandment of defence ministries and staff headquarters, the banning of military training, as well as other measures designed to ensure total disarmament.

The declaration stipulated that these measures be completed within one year, but should the capitalist countries reject such a deadline, the period could be prolonged, with only the first stage of the disarmament being accomplished during the year.

The Soviet declaration on general and total disarmament was received with approval and gratitude by the democratic public. The American bourgeois paper *The Baltimore Sun* had to acknowledge that the Soviet proposals were shared by the ordinary people everywhere,[115] while the British Labour leader George Lansbury remarked: "I am sure that if you put the Russian proposal before any gathering of ordinary men and women they would unanimously vote in favour of it.... I look upon this statement of Russia as the biggest thing that has been brought into the peace movement."[116] However

[113] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador in London, January 9, 1926.

[114] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador in London, January 13, 1926.

[115] *The Baltimore Sun*, December 2, 1927.

[116] *The Daily Herald*, December 2, 1927.

there was no serious discussion of the Soviet proposals at the 4th session of the Preparatory Commission. A month before the next session, the 5th was due to open, the Soviet government submitted to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations the text of a draft convention on immediate, total and general disarmament with an explanatory note. This draft was discussed at the 5th session of the Preparatory Commission meeting in Geneva from March 15 to 24, 1928, but was rejected. It was opposed by Britain, France, Japan and the United States.

The Soviet Union, however, did not abandon its efforts for disarmament. After the Western powers rejected its draft for general and total disarmament, the Soviet Union prepared the draft of a convention on the reduction of armaments and tabled it at the 5th session, so that practical steps towards disarmament could still be made.

The principle on which the Soviet draft for partial disarmament was based was that of the progressive reduction of all types and categories of armaments and a coefficient of proportional reduction that would be the biggest (50 per cent) for the strongest powers. The Soviet draft also provided for effective control over disarmament and the setting up for this purpose of a Permanent International Control Commission that would include all countries adhering to the Convention. Discussion of the draft was, however, postponed until the next session, the 6th, which met on April 15, 1929.[117] The Soviet proposals were opposed by Britain, France, the United States and other countries. The US government objected most strongly to any foreign control. The Secretary of State stressed in the instructions forwarded to the American representative in the Preparatory Commission that "the United States will not tolerate the supervision of any outside body in this matter nor be subject to inspection or supervision by foreign agencies or individuals."[118] The United States went as far as threatening to withdraw from the Preparatory Commission were the Soviet draft adopted. As a result of the joint efforts of the representatives of the capitalist countries, the Soviet proposals were turned down.

The 5th Congress of Soviets in its resolution on the Soviet government's report stated that "the rejection of the Soviet disarmament drafts in the preparatory commission on disarmament and the evident reluctance of the capitalist countries belonging to the League of Nations that sat in the preparatory commission to make even the smallest step towards a reduction of armaments only tends to confirm once again that these countries ... build their entire policy on prepa-

[117] V. M. Khaitsman, *USSR and Disarmament (Between the Two World Wars)*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 207-09, 221, 224 (in Russian).

[118] *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1926*, Vol. I, Washington, 1941, p. 88.

rations for another world war". In view of the imperialist powers' military preparations and their continuing hostility to the Soviet Union, the Congress instructed the Soviet government that, while continuing to work steadfastly for preserving peaceful relations with all powers, it should also take steps to strengthen the country's defence potential.[119]

It would be hard to overestimate the significance of the Soviet efforts to promote disarmament in the twenties. Goals for effective disarmament had for the first time ever been set to the world, and this was done by a government that sought to attain these goals by its deeds, not merely paying lipservice to them. For the first time in history proposals had been made for general and total disarmament, and, consequently, for making war impossible. The Soviet Union had once again demonstrated to the world public its desire for peace, for peaceful coexistence with the capitalist countries, as well as its readiness to eliminate war as a means for resolving disputes between countries. The conditions prevailing in the twenties, including the balance of forces on the world arena, were such that the programme could not be put into practice. That, however, in no way detracts from its historic significance.

The USSR and the Briand-Kellogg Pact

As contradictions between the imperialist powers grew sharply and the arms race continued, the French government invited the US government to conclude a pact on eternal friendship and the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy. France hoped a pact of this type would strengthen its positions in Europe. The United States, for its part, was unwilling to promote French influence, and sought to avoid a bilateral agreement. Instead of the French offer it made one of its own. The United States suggested a multilateral pact renouncing war, not a Franco-American one. The United States was hoping to achieve a number of things in this way. It would get rid of the French offer, while making political capital for itself. It also hoped it would consolidate the isolation of the Soviet Union, since the pact was meant to embrace all, or practically all the bourgeois countries, while leaving the USSR out in the cold. That is the origin of the Briand-Kellogg pact. It condemned war as a means for settling international conflicts. Its signatories renounced war as an instrument of national policy and undertook to settle all conflicts between them by peaceful means.

The United States invited most countries to sign the pact, but it

[119] *Congresses of All-Russian and All-Union Soviets in Decisions and Resolutions*, Moscow, 1935, p. 405 (in Russian).

left out the Soviet Union which was the only consistent fighter for peace and the security of nations. This exclusion of the Soviet Union was designed to isolate it, by creating the impression that relations between the capitalist countries and the Soviet Union could not be based on the principle of renunciation of war, i.e., on peaceful coexistence. That being the case, the Briand-Kellog pact was meant to become a tool in the preparations for war against the USSR.

No little effort was required from the Soviet Union to foil the plans of the initiators of the pact, who sought to aggravate further relations between the USSR and the capitalist countries. The Soviet government succeeded in opening the eyes of the world public to the principal reason for the exclusion of the USSR from the Briand-Kellogg pact and to the other defects of the draft, which were highlighted even more by the numerous stipulations of some of the signatories. However, despite all the defects of the draft, the Soviet government believed it should be made to serve the interests of peace. The Soviet Union announced its readiness to take part in the negotiations on the pact.

The Western powers, unwilling to reveal their anti-Soviet plans and bowing to public pressure, had to change their initial intention and invite the Soviet Union to join the pact. But they did this only after 15 countries had already signed it.

The invitation was handed in by the French Ambassador in Moscow on August 27, 1928.

In spite of the shortcomings of the pact, such as the reservations made by Great Britain, Germany, Italy and Japan, which reduced the principle of renunciation of war to mere words, the Soviet Union indicated its willingness to accede to the pact. The Soviet government replied to the invitation on August 31 and stressed once again that the pact should have added to it concrete disarmament commitments. It, however, expressed readiness to sign the pact, taking into consideration that in the tense international situation that then prevailed the pact could play a positive role, since it imposed certain obligations to preserve peace on its signatories. The Soviet Union then signed the pact and suggested it be made effective earlier than originally planned. This was necessary since the 15 countries that had signed the pact held up its ratification for four months.

A protocol on the advance effectiveness of the pact was signed in Moscow on the initiative of the USSR on February 9, 1929. Apart from the USSR, the Protocol was signed by Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Romania. Then Turkey, Iran and Lithuania acceded to it. This meant that the Moscow Protocol had been signed by many of the Soviet Union's neighbours. To a certain extent it helped strengthen peace and security in Eastern Europe and Asia by establishing that a war of aggression is prohibited under international law.

When the British government broke off relations with the Soviet Union, it was hoping that other countries would follow its example. But no country, with the exception of Canada, justified the hopes of the British Conservatives. The United States' attempts to isolate the USSR by means of the Briand-Kellogg pact also failed. These setbacks prompted a revision of the policy of non-recognition of the USSR and underlined the need for normal relations with it. The British public was also vigorously advocating the restoration of normal relations. A National Committee of a Society of Friends of Russia was founded with branches in all the major cities. The society set itself the aim of getting diplomatic relations with the USSR restored as quickly as possible. The President of the TUC General Council Ben Tillet declared that 90 per cent of the British workers demanded the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.[120] And he was perfectly justified in making such a statement.

There was also a mounting movement among various circles of the British bourgeoisie in favour of restoring relations with the Soviet Union. Certain sections of British industry had suffered considerable economic losses following the break in relations, as Soviet orders placed in Britain fell drastically. Their volume in 1927-1928 was only just over one-fourth of the 1925-1926 figure. British manufacturers, as Lloyd-George had to acknowledge, had as a result suffered heavy losses. In the spring of 1929 a delegation of 84 British industrialists, representing firms with a total capital of over 700 million pounds sterling visited Moscow. It was the largest ever delegation of British businessmen to visit the Soviet Union. The Soviet government told its members that it was prepared to place 200 million pounds' worth of orders in Britain, but only on condition that relations between the two countries were normalised.

A general election held on May 30, 1929, brought Labour back to Office. The Labour Party, like the Liberals, had made the immediate restoration of relations with the USSR an election slogan. The second Labour government was formed. Initially, the Labour government in agreeing to talks with the Soviet Union had intended to make another attempt to get a preliminary settlement from the USSR of the question of debts and other so-called disputed issues. The Soviet government, naturally, could not accept this.

On July 17, the British government invited the Soviet government to send its representative to London for talks. When announcing its agreement to this in a note on July 23, the Soviet government made it clear that it agreed "to a preliminary exchange of views only on the

[120] V. I. Popov, *Anglo-Soviet Relations (1927-1929)*, Moscow, 1958, p. 148 (in Russian).

procedure of a subsequent discussion of disputed issues, not on their essence".[121]

The Soviet Ambassador to France V.S. Dovgalevsky arrived in London on July 29 to conduct the talks. Two days later he was forced to break them off and leave London, as the Foreign Secretary Henderson sought to discuss the disputed issues themselves, not procedural matters.

On September 10, the British government suggested that the procedural talks be resumed in London on September 24. This suggestion was accepted. As a result of the talks, a protocol on the immediate resumption of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Britain was signed on October 3, 1929. It provided for a settlement of disputed issues after the exchange of ambassadors. Thus, the anti-Soviet policy of the British imperialists had once again proved a total failure.

The restoration of Anglo-Soviet relations was a major success for the Soviet Union's foreign policy. As the 16th Communist Party Congress pointed out, "it was the Soviet government's firm and steadfast policy that led to the resumption of diplomatic relations with Britain".[122]

* * *

In 1925 the Soviet Union launched its programme of the socialist industrialisation of the country. The 14th Communist Party congress had stressed the need "to ensure economic independence for the USSR, which would prevent it from becoming an appendage of the capitalist world economy". Between 1925 and 1929, imperialist diplomacy, and especially the British and American, undertook a whole series of hostile actions designed to isolate the USSR both diplomatically and economically and to prevent its industrialisation and the building of socialism.

The Soviet Union warded off these hostile imperialist attacks. Soviet diplomacy neutralised the attempts of Britain and the United States to set up an anti-Soviet bloc, as well as the attempts to complicate Soviet-German relations.

By counterposing to the Western powers' (with Britain in the lead) aggressive policy, its own firm and active peaceful policy, the Soviet Union strengthened relations with many of its neighbours, and also consolidated its own international standing. It ensured that the country could get down to its industrialisation programme.

The decision to industrialise the country was made by the 14th Party Congress. But the Soviet Union had to rely practically exclusive-

[121] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XII, Moscow, 1967, p. 408.
[122] *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 4, p. 408.

ly on its own internal resources, since, apart from certain credits provided by Germany, it was unable to obtain any long-term loans. Soviet foreign policy tasks were defined in the CC report to the 14th Party Congress by J.V. Stalin as follows: "Firstly, to work against new wars, and then to seek to preserve peace.... The idea of peace forms the foundation for our government's policy, its foreign policy.... Secondly, to seek to expand our trade turnover with the outside world on the basis of strengthening the foreign trade monopoly. Thirdly, to seek closer relations with the countries vanquished in the imperialist war, with those countries which ... are in opposition to the dominating alliance of the great powers. Fourthly, to seek closer relations with the dependent and colonial countries."[123] And that was the line followed in practice by Soviet foreign policy.

It was in those years (starting from 1925) that the Soviet Union put forward the idea of non-aggression and neutrality pacts that included the commitment of the signatories not to take part in alliances hostile to the other side, nor in financial or economic blockades or boycotts directed against the other side. It signed such pacts with Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran, Germany and Lithuania. Thus "the principles of non-aggression and neutrality became part of the Soviet Union's constructive peaceful policy and formed the basis for its further foreign policy efforts".[124] It was in 1925-1928 that Soviet foreign policy for the first time put forward a comprehensive and concrete programme for general and total disarmament. During this period the Soviet Union's peaceful foreign policy won it the even greater respect of the peoples of the world.

[123] *The 14th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), December 18-31, 1925. Verbatim Record*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1926, pp. 26-27 (in Russian).

[124] *Ten Years of Soviet Diplomacy. Acts and Documents*, Moscow, 1927, p. 35 (in Russian).

CHAPTER IX

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN THE YEARS OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE AGGRAVATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION (1929-1932)

The Effect of the World Economic Crisis on International Relations

Towards the end of 1929 an economic crisis of hitherto unknown proportions struck the capitalist world. It affected industry, agriculture, trade and finances and embraced practically all the capitalist countries. Worst hit were Germany and the United States. Industrial production decreased from the beginning of the crisis to the end of 1932 in Britain by 16.5 per cent, France 31.9 per cent, Germany—46.7 per cent, Japan—32.4 per cent and in the United States by 46.2 per cent.

Since the economic crisis developed against the background of a general crisis of the capitalist system, its effect was all the greater. It aggravated all the contradictions of capitalism, including those between the biggest imperialist powers: between Germany and the countries that had won the war, between the United States and Britain, between the United States and Japan, between France and Italy, between Britain and France, and so on. The contradictions also became more acute between the imperialist powers and the colonial and dependent countries, and the national liberation movement acquired a new impetus. Understandably, the crisis and the ensuing mass unemployment and impoverishment led to a sharp upsurge of the class struggle within the capitalist countries. This was especially true of Germany. The contradictions between the two social systems—the capitalist and the socialist—also became more marked. The entire international situation became more complicated, and the danger of war greater.

The Soviet Union at that time was working on its first five-year plan. Socialism was advancing on all fronts. The heavy industry, the basis of all economic progress, was developing rapidly despite the immence difficulties. While production was plummeting in the capitalist world and mass unemployment soaring, in the Soviet Union industry was forging rapidly ahead and unemployment was eliminated once and for all.

The year of 1929 saw the beginning of the radical changes in agriculture, as collectivisation of farming got underway. "The introduction in the Soviet countryside of large-scale socialist farming meant a *great revolution in economic relations, in the entire way of*

life of the peasantry."[1]

For the Soviet Union's foreign policy a factor of special significance was the growth of the country's trade with other countries. Such trade was essential for the success of the industrialisation programme. Soviet imports increased between 1929 and 1932 by 26 per cent, with the bulk consisting of machines and equipment needed to speed up the rate of socialist construction. Not having obtained sufficient credits, the Soviet Union had to pay for imports in cash and push exports for all its worth.

Soviet Foreign Policy Against The Anti-Soviet Plans of the Imperialist Powers

As in the past, the Soviet achievements aroused the fear and fury of the world bourgeoisie. What is more, its hate for the Soviet Union grew apace with the mounting Soviet achievements. The fact that the British Tories had failed in their adventurist policy of severing diplomatic relations with the USSR did nothing to stop new attempts to form anti-Soviet blocs or all kinds of provocations against the USSR. The imperialists sought to prevent the first five-year plan from being fulfilled. They still had not abandoned hopes of creating conditions for another armed intervention of the USSR. With this in mind, they encouraged the anti-Soviet activities of the fascist and militarist forces. Specifically, they were active in fostering the revival of German militarism. By 1929 (i.e. before the world economic crisis) Germany, aided by foreign loans, had largely restored its military-industrial potential. By 1932 it had got rid of its reparation obligations. The moratorium on payments introduced during the crisis also released it from repayment of vast debts on the loans obtained in the 1920s and invested predominantly in the heavy industry.

During the years of the economic crisis, the imperialists continued to use a variety of means against the USSR, including the provocation of armed clashes. In 1929 the imperialist states used the Chinese militarists to provoke a conflict on the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER). On July 10, 1929, troops of the militarist Chang Hsueh-liang, with the blessing of Chiang Kai-shek, captured the telegraph offices of the CER and arrested more than 200 Soviet citizens working for the railway, which was managed jointly by the Soviet Union and China in keeping with the 1924 agreement.

When the Soviet government tried to enter into negotiations in order to settle the conflict by peaceful means, the Chinese side ignored its overtures. In view of this, the Soviet Union was forced to recall its representatives from China, halt railway traffic with it

[1] *The Road to Communism*, p. 458.

and demand the recall of Chinese representatives from the USSR. The governments of Britain, the United States and France tried to take advantage of the conflict to interfere in Soviet-Chinese relations, but were firmly rebuffed by the USSR.

The Chinese militarists in the meantime continued their military provocations on the Soviet border. What is more, Soviet territory—in the Maritime and Baikal areas, was invaded in mid-November by Mukden and whiteguard forces. The Special Far Eastern Army under Blukher repelled the militarist attacks and launched a counter-offensive, pursuing their forces on Chinese territory. This served as a lesson to all who were thinking of violating the security of the USSR.

The campaign against the Soviet Union at that time also took the form of calling for a crusade. An open appeal for a crusade was made by the Pope in February 1930. The head of the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury likewise called for a crusade alleging religious persecution in the USSR. He called for interference in the Soviet Union's internal affairs and even for the severance of diplomatic relations. The ultra-right Tories, displeased with the Labour government's restoration of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, demanded that they be broken off again. In support of their demand they used the slanderous inventions about religious persecution in the USSR. Other capitalist countries also spread malicious lies on this subject. The whole object of the slander campaign was to keep up a hostile atmosphere around the first workers' and peasants' state, using the talk about a religious crusade as a smokescreen.

Religion was not alone in being used to fuel the anti-Soviet campaign, another issue was the so-called use of forced labour. With crisis conditions and unemployment rampant in the capitalist world, the Soviet Union was accused of selling its goods on world markets at below-cost prices, of dumping, in order to disorganise the capitalist economy. This was one of the methods used by the imperialists and their acolytes to try and put the blame on the Soviet Union for the outcome of the crisis that was having such dire effects on the working people, and to undermine Soviet prestige among the working class. In spreading the lies about Soviet dumping, the reactionaries at the same time called for a boycott of Soviet goods, in other words for an economic war against the Soviet Union.

The slander campaign about so-called Soviet dumping had been worked out in advance and was conducted jointly by the reactionary circles in a number of countries. At the end of 1929 a consultative committee was set up in France to regulate trade with the USSR. In effect its purpose was to strike a deal with the firms trading with the Soviet Union.[2] Shortly afterwards assets belonging to the Soviet trade

[2] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of the Soviet Ambassador to France to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, January 2, 1931.

mission in France were frozen. By March 1930, Soviet-French trade was in dire straits. The Soviet Ambassador to France Dovgalevsky stressed in a conversation with the French Foreign Minister Briand that "Franco-Soviet trade relations are in jeopardy".[3] Litvinov, who was appointed People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in July 1930, as Chicherin was by that time very ill, warned the French Ambassador in Moscow Erbette that Soviet trade organisations would not only refuse to place any new orders in France, but "trade with that country could stop completely ... if the present situation continued".[4]

In Britain there were sharp attacks on Soviet timber exports. The British government went as far as trying to interfere in the internal affairs of the USSR by proposing an investigation of working conditions in the timber industry.[5]

There was a very close contact between the monopoly circles of the United States and Britain in orchestrating the slander campaign about the use of "forced labour" in the USSR and alleged Soviet dumping. Both opposed the exports of Soviet oil. In order to organise joint Anglo-American action against Soviet exports, the prominent Anglo-Dutch oil magnate Deterding made a special trip to the United States. In turn the American Secretary of the Treasury Mellon made a tour of European countries in August 1930, to coordinate their efforts with those of the United States in organising a joint economic boycott of the Soviet Union.

The French Minister of Commerce Flandin set himself much the same aims during the tour he made of European countries. Meanwhile Senator Copeland in an article in *The New York Times* on July 5, 1931 called for an embargo on Soviet goods by the capitalist countries, claiming that this "would be followed by an uprising in Russia, and the other countries of the world would then step in and restore order".[6]

Anti-Soviet efforts were not confined to slander about so-called Soviet dumping and calls for a boycott. In July 1930, the United States was the first to introduce discriminatory measures against Soviet exports, as a result of which they dropped sharply. France followed in the United States' footsteps and in October 1930, introduced additional barriers to the import of Soviet goods. By a decree of October 3, licences were needed to import certain Soviet goods

[3] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Soviet Ambassador to France and French Foreign Minister A. Briand, March 25, 1930.

[4] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the French Ambassador in Moscow, July 26, 1930.

[5] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of the Soviet Ambassador to Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, May 1930.

[6] *The New York Times*, July 5, 1931.

(timber, flax, grain, sugar, treacle, glue, gelatine, paraffin, meat products, etc.). This made it highly difficult for Soviet goods to reach France. Other governments also boycotted Soviet goods, such as the governments of Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania, Belgium, etc. They believed that a boycott of Soviet goods would hurt the Soviet Union, and would make more difficult, if not prevent, the country's socialist industrialisation.

The Soviet government exposed the slanderous accusations about Soviet dumping. It took effective counter-measures in reply to the capitalist countries' economic war and their boycott of Soviet goods. On October 20, 1930, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR released a special decision on economic relations with countries practicing discrimination in trade with the USSR. It was decided to stop altogether or cut back drastically the placement of orders and purchases in these countries, to stop using their transport facilities, to introduce restrictions on goods in transit to and from those countries, and to stop or reduce to a minimum the use of ports, transit facilities and bases of those countries for Soviet transit or re-export operations.[7]

Ten major French firms and industrial associations protested against the French government's discriminatory measures in regard to Soviet goods. Nevertheless the French government for a considerable time continued with this policy. It was only in mid-1931 that it was finally forced to make certain concessions. On July 16, it revoked its decree of October 3, 1930. But two days later, it pushed through parliament a bill substantially increasing custom tariffs, and this increase affected the goods coming into France from the Soviet Union. Simultaneously it established import quotas for the main import goods, with the Soviet Union getting no share of the quotas in most cases. As a result of all these measures, the situation became far worse, not better. The Soviet Union replied by reducing its exports to France still further, making them almost insignificant.[8]

In May 1930, under the pretext of developing economic cooperation and joint efforts to combat the economic crisis, Briand suggested setting up a union of European continental countries on the lines of a federation. His draft became known as the Pan-European project. The federation would exclude the United States and also Britain (as a non-continental country). Nor was there any place left in it for the Soviet Union, on the grounds that it was not a European state.

The Soviet government made its negative attitude towards the Pan-European project quite clear. It showed that France was hoping through this project to strengthen its influence on the policies of the

[7] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XIII, Moscow, 1967, p. 584.

[8] *Trade Relations of the USSR with the Capitalist Countries*, Moscow, 1938, pp. 91-92 (in Russian).

European countries and even establish its domination over Western Europe. It also showed that what France was actually trying to do was set up groupings of countries under its leadership that would be directed against other countries, not part of Pan-Europe, and first and foremost, directed against the USSR.

Although the ruling circles in the capitalist countries had anti-Sovietism in common, they did not have a common view on the plans for Pan-Europe. Foreign ministers of the European states belonging to the League of Nations met to discuss the Briand memorandum in Geneva on September 9, 1930. The British and German representatives opposed the Briand proposals, and the plan failed. It was however decided to submit it to a plenary session of the League of Nations. It was also suggested that a European commission be set up to examine the problems connected with the French proposals. The attitude of the United States to the Briand plan was likewise negative.

When the German Ambassador in Moscow Dirksen met the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs on June 20 and December 29, 1930, he noted that his government saw a danger of France establishing its hegemony over Europe through the Pan-Europe project. He also underlined that Germany would raise the question of inviting the USSR and Turkey to the negotiations. On June 25, 1930, the Italian representative in Moscow Ceruti said that his government, too, would favour the participation of the USSR and Turkey.[9]

They did just that. When the European commission met in January 1931, the German and Italian representatives called for invitations being extended to the Soviet Union (as well as other countries, not members of the League of Nations, like Turkey and Iceland). Soviet participation was opposed by the representatives of France, Belgium, Romania, Yugoslavia, the Netherlands and Switzerland. They as much as said that a Soviet presence would cramp their style. In view of the differences, the question was turned over to a special commission that would study the problems of a European Union. On January 21, 1931, the commission passed a resolution stating that it would study the problems of the world economic crisis and for purposes of this study would unvite through the Secretary-General of the League of Nations the Soviet Union, Turkey and Iceland.[10]

The USSR accepted the invitation to take part in the work of the commission as part of its efforts to combat the setting up of imperialist blocs. The Soviet delegation's main task was to foil, or, at least, to make more difficult any anti-Soviet activities on the part of the European commission. The Italian Ambassador in Moscow told the

[9] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of Talks Held by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs with the German Ambassador in Moscow, June 20 and December 29, 1930, and with Italy's representative in Moscow, June 25, 1930.

[10] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. III, p. 472.

People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs on April 28, 1931 that the sponsors of Pan-Europe feared very greatly what Soviet representatives would have to say at the forthcoming European commission session.[11]

The Soviet Union took part in the commission's May session and used the opportunity to expose the slander about Soviet dumping. On May 18, 1931 it tabled the draft of a protocol on economic non-aggression. Apart from renouncing war as a means of resolving international conflicts, as formally proposed by the Briand-Kellogg pact, the Soviet Union proposed that all countries or groups of countries should renounce all secret and open forms of economic aggression against any other country or groups of countries. It was suggested that each country adopt legislation banning appeals for the boycott of the foreign trade of another country. The Soviet delegation underlined that the discontinuation of economic aggression would pave the way to the peaceful cooperation of countries in the economic field, regardless of their social system. The Soviet delegates argued that such cooperation was desirable, possible and necessary. It would also promote the establishment of political confidence between states. The Soviet Union suggested officially confirming the principle of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between countries with different social systems and the renunciation of discrimination in economic relations.[12]

The discussion of the Soviet proposals in the European commission dragged on for some time. When the commission met in August-September it passed the matter over to a special committee that was convened in November 1931. Following a debate, the committee approved in the main the idea of a pact on economic non-aggression proposed by the Soviet Union. But such a pact never became a reality because of the negative attitude of the ruling circles of most capitalist countries.

As for the Pan-Europe project, it fell through because the British, American, German and Italian ruling circles did not want France's role in European affairs enhance. Soviet diplomatic activities also helped to shelve the project.

In an attempt to find a way out of the crisis at the expense of the Soviet Union, the imperialists continued with their preparations for war against the socialist state. Representatives of the general staffs of countries bordering on the USSR (Poland, Latvia, Estonia and Romania) held secret conferences, while the special (Eastern) department of the French General Staff continued to draw up plans for an anti-Soviet crusade.

[11] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the Italian Ambassador in Moscow, April 28, 1931.

[12] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XIV, Moscow, 1968, p. 342.

The imperialist circles were preparing plans for the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, with parts of it going to anyone who took part in an anti-Soviet war. The anti-Soviet campaign was particularly bitter in France. There were calls for the severance of diplomatic relations with the USSR and for repressive measures against the staff of Soviet offices. In a number of countries there were cases of direct provocation. In Warsaw, for instance, an attempt was made to blast the Soviet Embassy in April 1930.

The 6th All-Union Congress of Soviets noted in its resolution that these and other such incidents indicated that "the imperialist forces were preparing for direct armed intervention against the Soviet Union".[13]

But alongside with this trend towards intervention, another and more sensible trend was developing too. As the 16th Communist Party Congress put it, "the growing economic might of the USSR, while increasing the danger for the bourgeoisie and heightening the risk of intervention against the USSR, especially in view of the current crisis and the developing revolutionary movement, was at the same time forcing certain groups of the bourgeoisie to advance and strengthen economic ties with the USSR".[14] Thus, a provisional trade agreement was signed on April 16, between the USSR and Britain. Markets throughout the capitalist world because of the severe economic crisis had been greatly reduced, and only in the Soviet Union, which was untouched by the crisis, markets were widening as a result of rapid industrialisation. The Soviet share in world machine imports in 1931 rose to 30 per cent and by 1932 had gone up to almost 50 per cent. The Soviet Union purchased about 70 per cent of the machine-tools exported by Britain. In 1930 the Soviet Union was the second largest buyer of American machines and equipment, and in 1931 it moved to the top of the list.

However, subsequently the Soviet Union sharply decreased its puchases in the United States due to the discriminatory measures against Soviet goods in that country. In 1932 its imports from the United States were only one-eighth of the 1931 figure. The loser from this drop was the United States.

Soviet-German Relations

The more aggressive German politicians insisted that Germany should join the anti-Soviet front to combat Bolshevism. This group of

[13] *Congresses of All-Russian and All-Union in Decisions and Resolutions*, Moscow, 1935, p. 435 (in Russian).

[14] *The 16th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), June 26-July 13, 1930. Verbatim Record*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1930, p. 712 (in Russian).

politicians included Hitler and his company, von Papen, Ludendorf and others. But despite their efforts, Germany at that time did not join the countries boycotting Soviet goods, as it was particularly interested in getting Soviet orders and in increasing its exports to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union's trade and economic ties with Germany during the years of the world economic crisis developed better than with other countries. Early in 1931 a delegation of German industrialists visited the Soviet Union to study the possibilities of expanding the export of German goods. As a result of this visit a new agreement was signed on April 14, 1931 for the placement of 300 million marks' worth of Soviet orders in Germany, and a credit for that sum. Actually, the value of orders placed was even greater—345.1 million marks.[15]

A year later, on July 15, 1932, a new Soviet-German agreement was signed covering general terms of deliveries, as well as regulating the conclusion and fulfilment of contracts. In addition, the agreement provided for more credits for the placement of Soviet orders in Germany.[16]

As a result of all this Soviet-German trade in the crisis years was considerably expanded. Germany's share in Soviet imports grew from 23.7 per cent in 1930 to 37.2 per cent in 1931, and to 46.5 per cent in 1932. Germany thus jumped to the top of the list in Soviet imports, while the USSR took first place among buyers of German machines both in 1931 and 1932, when 43 per cent of all exported German machines went to the USSR.[17]

Germany could not afford to let its relations with the Soviet Union deteriorate because of the unfavourable international situation in 1931-1932 and the economic disarray caused by the crisis, as well as because of the growing might of the USSR and its rising prestige in world affairs. Germany's interest in maintaining relations with the USSR at their previous level was manifested, among other things, by the comparatively quick conclusion of Soviet-German talks. These were crowned on June 24, 1931 by the signing of a protocol that prolonged the 1926 Berlin treaty on neutrality and the convention on arbitration procedures.

The Soviet press's reaction was highly favourable. *Pravda*, for instance, wrote: "We can view this fact only as a success for the Soviet Union's peaceful policy, which is directed against blockade and intervention, and is the result of the growing economic and political might of the USSR which is founded on the correct Leninist general policy of our Party."[18]

[15] *Trade Relations of the USSR with the Capitalist Countries*, p. 138.

[16] Ibid., p. 140.

[17] Ibid., pp. 139-41.

[18] *Pravda*, June 26, 1931.

Germany's ruling circles also had to take into account that the Soviet Union's economic might had grown and its position on the world scene had been strengthened. Nor could they ignore the fact that the German working class, led by the German Communist Party, strongly opposed Germany's participation in any anti-Soviet actions. So until the end of 1932 the German government, not without an internal struggle, kept to its policy of maintaining good-neighbourly relations and peaceful cooperation with the USSR.

When the von Papen government came to power in Germany, the trend towards agreement with the West, at the expense of the USSR and against it, became more pronounced. And the establishment of a fascist dictatorship in Germany gave the upper hand to those circles that opposed good-neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union and made preparations for an imperialist war their first and overriding priority.

The USSR and Its Neighbours in Asia and Eastern Europe. The Non-Aggression Pact with France

The Soviet government continued to seek an improvement in relations with all its neighbours. On December 17, 1929, it signed a protocol with Turkey prolonging the 1925 treaty, and on March 7, 1931, a supplementary protocol. The year of 1931 also saw the conclusion of a Soviet-Turkish trade treaty offering wider trade possibilities than the 1927 treaty. In 1932 the Soviet government made a credit of 8 million US dollars available to Turkey for the purchase in the USSR of machines and industrial equipment. It also gave Turkey scientific and technical assistance, sending its engineers to design projects. Meanwhile Turkish specialists received training at Soviet higher educational establishments.

Relations between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan developed equally favourably.

A Soviet-Afghan treaty on neutrality and mutual non-aggression based on the same principles as the 1926 treaty was signed on June 24, 1931.[19] This was an indication of the stability of the friendly relations between the two countries. Their economic and cultural ties also expanded and deepened steadfastly. The Soviet Union gave Afghanistan disinterested aid in developing its economy.

The treaty on guarantees and neutrality of October 1, 1927, between the USSR and Iran operates to this day. It followed up the treaty of February 26, 1921.

The restraint shown by Soviet diplomacy and its peaceful policy made it possible to surmount all the obstacles to a treaty with Poland.

[19] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XIV, pp. 392-95.

After much procrastination on the part of the Pilsudski government, a treaty on non-aggression and neutrality was at long last signed on July 25, 1932. Both sides renounced war as an instrument of national policy in their relations, and pledged to refrain from any aggressive actions or from attacking each other, either separately or with other countries. The two sides also pledged to remain neutral should one of them be attacked by third party or parties. A special article committed the two sides not to participate in alliances or blocs directed against either of them.[20]

This treaty was highly important. Its conclusion was largely the result of the Polish government having taken into account the changed international situation, and, specifically, the strengthening of Germany, the revival of German militarism and the growth of its desire for revenge, especially in regard to Poland.

Following the establishment of normal diplomatic relations with France, the Soviet government repeatedly suggested that the two sign a non-aggression pact. In January 1928, for instance, the Soviet Ambassador to France Dovgalevsky was instructed by the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to inform Briand of Soviet readiness to get down immediately to talks on such a pact. "We have concluded a number of such pacts with neighbouring states," the letter noted, "and we invited the French government, which is familiar with them, to choose any one as model or basis for negotiations. We are ready to examine any counter-proposals made by the French government, as well as amendments and additions. Should the French government wish to touch on our relations with other countries, we shall not refuse to do so, but expect concrete proposals."[21] However, the French government for a long time refused to conclude such a treaty with the Soviet Union. French ruling circles tried to make a non-aggression pact dependent on a favourable solution of the repayment of tsarist debts and return of property nationalised after the October revolution.

In 1929-1931 the Soviet Union did not officially raise the question of a non-aggression pact. But when the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs met the French ambassador in Moscow (on May 22, 1929 and March 10, 1931) he did make the point that the Soviet government was still prepared to sign such a pact with France.[22]

The French government, however, stuck to its former, in effect negative, position.

[20] Ibid., Vol. XV, Moscow, 1969, pp. 436-39.

[21] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador to France V. S. Dovgalevsky, January 2, 1928.

[22] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the French Ambassador in Moscow, May 22, 1929, and March 10, 1931.

Many political observers at that time believed that the severance of Franco-Soviet diplomatic relations was inevitable, as was a further aggravation of the political situation in Europe. However, French ruling circles were afraid to go quite so far in their anti-Soviet policy. And for a number of reasons.

To begin with the economic, political and military might of the Soviet Union had increased very considerably, which made an armed venture against the Soviet Union a very risky business.

Then by 1931 France began to feel the pinch of the world economic crisis. At the same time the increased activity of the German revanchists and the aggravation of relations with fascist Italy, which had called for the revision of the postwar agreements also tended to weaken France's position in Europe and could even in the final count lead to its isolation. All these factors prompted France to change its policy towards the USSR. On April 20, 1931, the French government announced its readiness to enter into negotiations on a non-aggression pact, arbitration procedure convention and trade agreement.[23]

The Soviet government authorised its Ambassador to France Dovgalevsky to conduct the negotiations. They began early in May 1931, and proceeded rather slowly.

The most rabid opponents of a non-aggression pact were the political circles that had close ties with heavy industry and the general staff. The real reason for their opposition was that they feared the pact could prove an obstacle to the aggressive aspirations of the French imperialists and foil their plans for an anti-Soviet bloc under France's leadership. They also maintained that the Soviet five-year plan was exclusively military and constituted a threat to France's security. On the other hand, the five-year plan was, they alleged, also the cause of Soviet dumping that had undermined the prosperity of the people of France and other European countries.

As for the talks on arbitration procedures, which began in October 1931, they moved fairly smoothly and agreement was reached on signing an appropriate convention.

On August 10, 1931, the Soviet-French non-aggression pact was at last initialled. But for another whole year the French government, influenced by anti-Soviet forces, delayed and procrastinated. It sought to make the signing of the pact dependent on the signing either earlier or simultaneously of non-aggression pacts with France's allies—Poland and Romania.

On September 23, 1931, the French government told the Soviet ambassador that it believed the conclusion of a Soviet-French pact should come after a Soviet-Polish treaty or simultaneously with it. Dovgalevsky strongly objected to any linkage of the two treaties, but

[23] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of the Soviet Ambassador to France to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, April 20, 1931.

at the same time stressed that "the Soviet government had repeatedly stated its readiness to sign a similar pact with Poland".[24] The Party's Central Committee attached great importance to improving relations with Poland. During the Soviet-Polish talks, the Party Politburo instructed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to seek the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Poland. It was signed on July 25, 1932.[25]

There remained Romania. Soviet representatives negotiated with Romanian representatives for ten whole months in Riga, Geneva, the Hague and Warsaw, but the Romanian government rejected even the drafts of its representatives. Attempts were also made to negotiate through France and Poland. This, too, proved unsuccessful and no non-aggression treaty was signed with Romania, since it insisted on the recognition of its seizure of Bessarabia. That the Soviet government, naturally, refused to do. In turn, the French government used Romania's negative attitude as a pretext for putting off the signing of the Soviet-French treaty.

On November 25, 1932 shortly before the signing of the non-aggression pact with France, the Romanian government gave it its official support. It was likewise approved by Poland. Consequently the French government was acting in agreement with its allies in Eastern Europe. The non-aggression treaty between the USSR and France was signed on November 29, 1932 simultaneously with a convention on arbitration procedures.

Article 1 of the treaty stated that both sides would refrain from resorting (separately or together with other countries) to war, to aggression against each other, and would respect the inviolability of the other signatory.

Article 2 pledged the two sides to observe neutrality and not to give aid or support to an aggressor or aggressors, should the other side be attacked.

In Article 3 the two sides stated that neither was tied by any agreement committing it to take part in an attack launched by a third party.

Under Article 4 the Soviet Union and France undertook "not to become party to any international agreement which would have as its practical result a ban on purchases from the other side or the sale of goods to it, or the provision of credits, and would take no measure that would have as its result the exclusion of the other side from any part in its foreign trade".

Under Article 5 the two sides undertook not to interfere in each

[24] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of the Soviet Ambassador to France to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, September 23, 1931.

[25] *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 4, Book 2, Moscow, 1971, p. 17.

other's internal affairs, and specifically, "to refrain from any action that could lead to the incitement or encouragement of any agitation, propaganda or attempt of intervention", etc. The article specified that "each of the Contracting Parties undertook not to set up, support, supply or subsidise or allow on its territory military organisations designed for an armed struggle against the other Party, nor organisations claiming for themselves the role of the government or representatives of all or part of its territory". This was important since there were many counter-revolutionary émigré organisations and elements in France waging an active struggle against the USSR. This article dealt a blow to the war mongers who were counting on using the émigré forces against the Soviet Union.

Article 6 stated that the two sides were committed to "resolving and settling all disputes or conflicts only by peaceful means", no matter what their nature or origin.

The Convention, a document of 8 articles, set forth the competence and composition of the arbitration commission, when it should meet, etc.[26]

The Soviet Union concluded similar treaties in 1932 with Finland (January 21), Latvia (February 5) and Estonia (May 4).

The conclusion or prolongation of non-aggression pacts in 1931-1932 did much to strengthen the security of the USSR, as well as of its partners—France, Poland and others.

The USSR at the Disarmament Conference

The Soviet government consistently worked for disarmament. In connection with the preparations for an international conference on disarmament, the Soviet government made identical oral statements on January 15, 1931 to the foreign ministries of Britain, Germany, Italy, Norway, Iran, Poland, France and Japan through its ambassadors in those countries. "The Soviet government believes," the statements noted, "that the conference could be of international significance, since the prolongation and consolidation of peace and the possibility of a new war of extermination could largely hinge on its results. The Soviet government has repeatedly pointed out that in the existing conditions the sole guarantee of preserving peace would be disarmament, or at least, the maximum reduction of armaments. It has put forward the corresponding draft conventions in the preparatory disarmament commission and will submit them again to the full conference." The statement underlined that it was for that purpose the Soviet government would be taking an active part in the coming disarmament conference. It also pointed out that "the full equality of

[26] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XV, p. 640.

all participants in the conference, big and small powers alike, was essential for its success".[27]

The disarmament conference opened on February 2, 1932, in a tense international situation. The Japanese imperialists had already invaded Manchuria in September 1931, and occupied Mukden (Shenian), Changchun, Andung, Inkow and Hirin (Tsiling), thereby creating a dangerous seat of war in the Far East. On the day the conference opened, Japan bombed Shanghai and other Chinese cities.

As the conference proceeded, it revealed that the governments of the capitalist countries sought to use it to preserve their own armed forces and strengthen their military and political positions, while weakening as much as possible the armaments and armed forces of their rivals. Their disarmament declarations were just propaganda exercises designed to cover up the continuing arms race with phrases about disarmament.

The Soviet delegation urged strongly that ways be found "to put an end to wars", "to make war impossible, as it was the peoples of the whole world that suffered from it".[28] The Soviet government tabled proposals on general and total disarmament that were well founded, in contrast to the empty resolutions of the Preparatory Commission adopted in December 1930. It also tabled, on February 18, 1932, a draft resolution on its disarmament plan, which provided for "the speediest general and total abolition of all armed forces on the basis of the principle of equality for all".[29] The Soviet government called on all the governments represented at the conference to renounce war as an instrument of their national policy.

The Soviet delegation stipulated that should this draft resolution be rejected, its other proposals on partial disarmament submitted to the Preparatory Commission would remain in force. The Soviet government stressed that the disarmament problem should be resolved without further delay or procrastination, without looking for new obstacles and pretexts for rejecting disarmament. "Disarmament," the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs remarked, "should not be sent flying like a tennis ball from one commission or subcommission to another, from one conference to the next, from one session to another."[30]

In view of the fact that the bourgeois representatives were distorting the Soviet stand on control over disarmament, the Soviet delegation announced that discussions on control would be premature and should await effective disarmament. "The Soviet delegation had always insisted that first it is essential to agree on *what* should be

[27] Ibid., Vol. XIV, p. 29.
[28] Ibid., Vol. XV, p. 102.
[29] Ibid., p. 116.
[30] Ibid., Vol. XV, p. 420.

controlled (i. e. the degree of disarmament), and only afterwards on *how* this should be controlled."[31] The Soviet Union wanted strict control over disarmament, with legislative and trade union organisations involved in it.

The first session of the disarmament conference produced nothing. The bourgeois representatives turned down the Soviet proposals and thereby exposed themselves as opponents of disarmament. What is more, in order to reach agreement with Germany, the representatives of the United States, Britain and Italy agreed to its demand for equality in armaments during behind-the-scenes talks, which, in effect, were held only to find ways to build up Germany's armaments.

By threatening to withdraw from the conference, the German government won recognition of Germany's equality from Britain, the United States, Italy and France. The heads of government of these five countries met in Geneva on December 10, 1932, on Britain's initiative, and on the next day, December 11, passed a resolution recognising Germany's right to equality in armaments in a system which would provide security for all nations. The resolution also stated that "The Governments of the United Kingdom, France and Italy had declared that one of the principles that should guide the Conference on Disarmament should be to grant to Germany, and to the other disarmed powers, equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations and that this principle should find itself embodied in the Convention containing the conclusions of the Conference on the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments".[32]

Thus the German imperialists received with the full consent of the governments of Britain, the United States, France and Italy, the opportunity to rearm openly.

Under the flag of equality for Germany, the Western powers took an important step that made it substantially easier for Germany to unleash the second world war.

Japanese Imperialist Aggression. Soviet Efforts for Peace and Security in the Far East

The deepening of the general crisis of capitalism and the resulting world economic crisis aggravated sharply the struggle of the imperialist powers for recarving the map of the world. This struggle first erupted into the open in the Far East, where in the autumn of 1931 Japan began to implement its programme of conquest outlined back in 1927 in the Tanaka Memorandum. On September 18, 1931, Japanese troops attacked China and occupied its northeast provinces

[31] *Izvestia*, September 25, 1932.

[32] *Foreign Policy Report*, Vol. VIII, No. 23, January 18, 1933, p. 274.

(Manchuria). The Japanese government described Manchuria as the front line of its defences, but in reality it was the Japanese imperialists' springboard for further aggression on the continent, for a thrust towards Peking that would take it deep inside China, and also for the invasion of the Soviet Far East and Mongolia. Bellicose statements by Japan's defence minister Araki for the press were timed to coincide with the seizure of Manchuria. Araki proclaimed the extensive imperialist plans to be carried out under the flag of anti-communism. He spoke of the Japanese morality that should be spread throughout the world, and, if need be, by force. The Mongolian People's Republic was described as an obstacle to the spread of this morality, and he expressed the hope that Mongolia would join the family of Eastern nations, which, translated from his militarist language, meant its subjugation to the Japanese conquerors. Araki also claimed that the Soviet Union posed a threat to the Japanese morality.

Although the American imperialists regarded Japan as a strong and dangerous rival, they encouraged the Japanese aggression against China. Trade between the United States and Japan flourished and Japan received economic aid from the American imperialists. They supplied Japanese industry and the army with strategic military materials in short supply. Although the Japanese expansion in China could not fail to cause anxiety among the ruling classes both in the United States and Britain, what they feared much more was the growth of the revolutionary movement in China and other Far Eastern countries. Reactionary circles in the United States regarded Japanese imperialism as the main striking force in the Far East in the struggle against the Soviet Union, the democratic forces in China and the national liberation movement in other countries of the Far East. At the same time the American imperialists were hoping that Japan's war against China, and especially the Soviet Union, would weaken Japan's position as a rival of the United States in the Far East. So their efforts were directed at pushing the Japanese aggressors in the northwest direction and involving the Soviet Union. British and French ruling circles were guided by much the same motives.

When the League of Nations where Britain and France played the leading role considered the Japanese-Chinese conflict, it failed to condemn Japan as the aggressor, and only called on the two countries to resolve their conflict. Such a resolution amounted to virtual encouragement of the Japanese aggressors.

And so Japan kindled the first flames of a new world war in the Far East not only with no opposition from the United States, Britain and France but even with their encouragement.

Japan's aggressive action in northeast China increased the war danger for the Soviet Union. This was pointed out in the letter of the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of August 27, 1932. Several months before the

attack on China the Japanese government asked the governments of Britain and France whether it could count on their direct support in case of war with the Soviet Union.[33] The evidence presented at the Tokyo Trial of the main Japanese war criminals in 1946-1948 showed that even at that time Japan was already contemplating war against the USSR. Japan's defence minister of 1930-1931 Minami told the court: "Manchuria was regarded as a military base in case of war with the Soviet Union. Both the occupation of Manchuria and the invasion of China stemmed from Japan's ultimate strategic aim of war against the Soviet Union."[34] The Soviet ambassador to Japan A.A. Troyanovsky wrote that the idea of a "preventive war" against the USSR was being spread in the country. Aggressive imperialist circles urged the government to stop hesitating and attack the USSR without further delay.[35] The defence minister Araki insisted that war between Japan and the Soviet Union was inevitable sooner or later, and that the country should be prepared for such a war.[36]

The Japanese government sought out various pretexts for hostile actions against the Soviet Union and did not stop before provocations or all kinds of inventions. On November 19, 1931, through its Ambassador in Moscow it demanded a stop to Soviet "interference" in Manchuria's internal affairs.[37]

Replying to the statement of the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow Hiroto, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs declared on November 20 that "in all its relations with other countries the Soviet Government abided strictly and consistently by its policy of peace and peaceful relations. It attached great significance to maintaining and strengthening existing relations with Japan. It pursued a policy of strict non-interference in conflicts between other countries. It hoped that the Japanese government, too, sought to preserve the existing relations between the two countries and would ensure that none of its actions or orders violated the interests of the USSR."[38]

The realistically-minded Japanese politicians believed that war against the Soviet Union was a trap set by the Western powers for Japan. When the Soviet Ambassador Troyanovsky remarked to Admiral Kato that he believed that not only war between their

[33] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the CC CPSU (B), August 27, 1932.

[34] *Pravda*, November 13, 1948.

[35] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Diary of the Soviet Ambassador to Japan, June 9, 1932.

[36] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Diary of the Soviet Ambassador to Japan, August 17, 1932.

[37] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow Hiroto, November 19, 1931.

[38] *Izvestia*, November 21, 1931.

countries, but also rumours to that effect were damaging the interests of the two countries and being spread and used by enemies of the USSR and Japan, the Admiral replied: "It's the Americans, foreign (American) circles want to set Japan and the Soviet Union at loggerheads."[39]

Prime Minister Sato also underlined on September 6, 1932, that the rumours of an impending Japanese-Soviet war had been spread by American agents. Much the same was said to the Soviet Ambassador by the Swedish Chargé d'Affaires in Tokyo Sastervahl and a German newsman Stemberg. The journalist even said that should Japan go to war against the Soviet Union, it would be financed by the United States. American embassy staff in Tokyo and American circles spoke openly of the inevitability of war between Japan and the USSR.

But the Soviet Communist Party and government displayed the greatest vigilance and did not allow the country to be drawn into a conflict incited by world reactionary forces.

In 1931, because of the tension on the Manchurian-Soviet border the Soviet Union took urgent steps to strengthen its Far Eastern defences.

The events in Manchuria were closely followed by the Soviet government. Top officials of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs repeatedly called in the Japanese Ambassador and asked for explanations of the events. On October 2, 1931 the People's Commissar told the Japanese Ambassador that the Japanese military authorities were operating in close contact with whiteguards, and specifically ataman Semyonov, and that the Soviet government as well as the public at large were deeply concerned over this.[40]

On December 31, 1931, the Soviet side proposed the conclusion of a Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact. It was noted that the Soviet Union already had such pacts with a number of countries and was negotiating them with others, and that as neighbours the Soviet Union and Japan needed such a pact. The Soviet statement, which was made to the Japanese Foreign Minister Ioshizawa, then visiting Moscow, also pointed to the great international significance of a non-aggression pact. It would be particularly appropriate at that time, since the future of Soviet-Japanese relations caused speculation in Western Europe and America. This would be stopped by the signing of a pact.

Ioshizawa pretended that the proposal was totally unexpected, although it was common knowledge that the Soviet Union had pre-

[39] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Diary of the Soviet Ambassador to Japan, June 9, 1932.

[40] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow, October 13, 1931.

viously made similar proposals—in 1928 and 1930.[41]

For a long time the negotiations on a pact were conducted by the Soviet Ambassador to Japan Troyanovsky. But the Japanese representatives stalled them in every way possible. To cover up their true attitude to a pact, the Japanese reactionaries talked about the desirability of any alliance between Japan, the Soviet Union and Germany that would be directed against the Anglo-Saxons, or an alliance between Japan, the USSR and the puppet state of Manchukuo set up by the Japanese imperialists in Manchuria.[42]

The Japanese government replied to the Soviet proposal only one year later. It rejected the idea of a pact on December 13, 1932 under the pretext that both Japan and the USSR were signatories of the multilateral Briand-Kellogg pact, and that made a separate non-aggression pact superfluous. Another argument put forward was that "the time was not yet ripe for a non-aggression pact".

The Soviet Union later raised the question again, but Japan had already irrevocably taken the path of aggression and was preparing to wage war against the USSR. It therefore rejected the Soviet proposals. So the threat of a Japanese-Soviet war became a permanent factor in the Far Eastern situation. Only the military and economic might of the Soviet Union deterred the Japanese military from attacking the USSR and for a time postponed the further expansion of aggression against China.

The Soviet people's and government's sympathies were wholly with the Chinese people who had taken a stand against Japanese aggression for the independence and freedom of their country. Fraternal relations based on the principles of proletarian internationalism developed between the USSR and the Provisional Central Workers' and Peasants' Government set up in the liberated areas of China. The Soviet Union all the time gave very considerable assistance to the Communist Party of China and the armed forces it led.

The Chinese working people demanded the resumption of the diplomatic relations with the USSR broken off by the Chinese militarists incited by the Western powers in 1929. The public demand and the danger of further Japanese aggression in China compelled the Nanking government to restore relations with the USSR (notes to this effect were exchanged on December 12, 1932). This highly important action was greeted with satisfaction by the democratic-minded public in China and by the Soviet people.[43] It helped to strengthen ties between the two countries and provided the Chinese people with

[41] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the Japanese Foreign Minister K. Ioshizawa in Moscow, December 31, 1931.

[42] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Diary of the Soviet Ambassador to Japan, April 14 and November 2, 1932.

[43] M. S. Kapitsa, *Soviet-Chinese Relations*, Moscow, 1958, p. 255 (in Russian).

certain political support in their struggle against the Japanese aggressors.

In view of the Japanese militarists continuing provocations on the Chinese Eastern Railway and desiring to deprive the Japanese imperialists of any pretext for provoking a war, the Soviet Union suggested in June 1933 that Japan should buy the railway. Talks on the purchase began on June 26, but took almost two years to complete. It was only on March 23, 1935, that the agreement was signed under which the Manchukuo authorities acquired the railway for 140 million yen. That was a sum considerably smaller than the Russian government had in its time invested in the construction of the railway.

* * *

The world economic crisis that erupted at the end of 1929 marked the end of capitalist stabilisation. The next four years (1930-1933) were marked by a crisis of unprecedented proportions. It led to a huge cut in industrial production and mass unemployment, hit agriculture, and brought about the disintegration of the international credit and monetary system, the reduction of world trade. It also stopped the payment of reparations and repayment of war debts. The crisis sharply aggravated the class struggle and the contradictions between the imperialist powers.

The economic crisis also increased the inequality of development common to the capitalist system, accelerated the process of changes in the balance of forces in the capitalist camp, undermined the whole system of imperialist treaties that had regulated the new division of the world following the First World War, promoted the seizure of power by fascist parties and other ultra-aggressive representatives of monopoly capital in a number of countries. In this way the crisis brought nearer the eruption of the Second World War.

Against this background of general economic disarray, the achievements of the Soviet Union, which during those years completed the building of the economic foundation of socialism, stood out all the more impressively. The imperialists replied to the increased might of the USSR and the consolidation of the socialist positions with more attempts to halt or at least hinder the Soviet Union's economic development.

In an attempt to find a way out of the crisis at the expense of the Soviet Union, the principal imperialist powers launched a bitter anti-Soviet campaign. As the 16th Congress of the Communist Party pointed out in 1930, the world bourgeoisie's hatred of the sole country of proletarian dictatorship in the world and of its revolutionary influence was manifested in the organisation of an economic blockade, in the campaign against Soviet exports, in the anti-Soviet campaign of the Church, in savage slander of the USSR in the bour-

geois and Social-Democratic press, and in the continuing preparations for war against the Soviet Union.

But as far as the Soviet Union was concerned, preserving peace remained central to its foreign policy. During this period the Soviet Union's peaceful foreign policy gave the country the opportunity to accomplish successfully its first five-year plan—the plan for socialist industrialisation and the collectivisation of agriculture.

In the years of the first five-year plan it was particularly important for the Soviet Union to do everything to accelerate the pace of industrialisation. The 16th Communist Party Congress underlined in its resolution that "deeming it necessary to develop further Soviet economic relations with the capitalist world on the basis of the inviolability of *the foreign trade monopoly* and the need to make the widest use of the technology of the advanced capitalist countries to speed up the country's industrialisation, the Congress underlines the great significance of Bolshevik rates of socialist industrialisation for ensuring *the economic independence* of the USSR, for strengthening the defence capability of the proletarian state and for rebuffing all attempts of intervention on the part of world imperialism."[44]

The Soviet government's foreign policy played an important part in the industrialisation of the USSR. Its job was to produce international conditions more favourable to industrialisation: to ensure peace and the unhampered progress of trade relations. Foreign trade allowed the country to buy the machines, equipment and metals required to build up the heavy industry quickly. That, for one, was the purpose of the expanding Soviet-German trade and economic ties, and of the 300-million credit received from Germany in April 1931, on the basis of which Soviet-German trade and economic relations were able to make good progress.

In the years of the First Five-Year Plan the Soviet Union built up a powerful heavy industry: machine-tool, automobile, farm machinery production, and electrical engineering, etc. That was when such industrial giants went up as the Ball-Bearing Plant, the motor works in Gorky and Moscow, the tractor plants in Kharkov and Stalingrad, the Kuznetsk steel mills, etc. The fulfilment of the First Five-Year Plan resulted in the substantial strengthening of the country's military-industrial potential and defence capability. This enhanced the international prestige of the USSR, and that was something the entire capitalist world could not ignore.

In 1929 the Soviet Union successfully repulsed the attack of émigré-Chinese troops on its Far Eastern border, an attack that had been organised by the imperialists. The conflict was resolved by the conclusion of a peace agreement. Hence, once again, the Soviet peace policy triumphed.

[44] *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 4, pp. 408-09.

The non-aggression and neutrality pacts concluded or resumed in 1929-1932 were another blow to the war mongers, to their plans for isolating the USSR and setting up an anti-Soviet bloc. The pacts helped substantially to consolidate the Soviet Union's position on the world scene. The revival of revanchist aspirations in Germany compelled France to improve relations with the Soviet Union.

The danger of war on the Far Eastern borders of the Soviet Union increased sharply and their defence demanded great attention and considerable expenses from the Soviet government.

Summing up Soviet foreign policy, the CC of the Communist Party in its report to the 17th Party Congress noted that "while prewar hysteria reigned in a number of countries, the Soviet Union had stood firm and immovable on its position of peace, fighting the threat of war, working for the preservation of peace, meeting halfway those countries which to one degree or another wanted peace preserved, and exposing and unmasking those who were preparing and inciting war".[45]

[45] *The 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks). January 26-February 10, 1934*, Moscow, 1934, p. 13 (in Russian).

CHAPTER X

THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF THE USSR AND SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY (1933-1937)

The International Situation in 1933-1937

Both economic and political upheavals in the capitalist states set the tone for international relationships during this period.

Still reeling from the worldwide economic crisis of 1929-1933, the capitalist countries had plunged into a prolonged depression. All the internal and external contradictions of the imperialist system became steadily more acute. Unemployment was as rampant as ever, with 10 million jobless in the USA alone. Throughout the capitalist and colonial world, revolutionary tension mounted. As the labour and anti-imperialist movements gathered strength, the ruling classes resorted more and more frequently to force. Convinced that parliamentary methods cannot always safeguard the capitalist system, they turned to terrorism. The German imperialists went so far as to set up a fascist dictatorship, handing over the reins of control to Hitler's Nazi Party.

In a number of other countries as well, the bourgeoisie set up governments along the fascist model, abolishing bourgeois-democratic freedoms. By 1936, citizens in only 10 of the 26 European states retained civil liberties, and even these were significantly reduced.

German national socialism represented fascism in most reactionary and belligerent form. Backed by American and British credit, German imperialism had regained its economic might and openly demanded that the world map be radically altered. Hitler's infamous *Mein Kampf* outlined its aggressive programme; a bible for the blood-thirsty, it justified and glorified the armed take-over of sovereign territories.

"We, the National Socialists," wrote Hitler, "consciously renounce the direction taken by German prewar foreign policy. We resume the trend abandoned 600 years ago. We call a halt to the age-old German thrust to Southern and Western Europe and set our sights on the East. Finally, we shall have done with prewar colonial and trade policies and move into the territorial policy of the future. When we speak of new lands in Europe today, we must think first and foremost of Russia and her vassal border states." Thus, German fascist imperialism openly announced its jingoistic designs on Soviet territory. Statements and speeches made by Hitler after he had seized power proved that the expansionist programme set forth in *Mein Kampf* had always been the blueprint for attack on the

USSR and Eastern Europe.

At a secret meeting with the German Joint Chiefs of Staff, held on February 3, 1933 in the apartment of General Hammerstein, Commander of Land Forces, Hitler reaffirmed his expansionist ambitions. He particularly stressed the need to "seize strategic territories in the East, and ruthlessly Germanise them".[1]

Hitler's scheme was calculated on intimidating reactionary Western statesmen with the supposed revolutionary menace represented by the Soviet Union. In proclaiming fascist Germany the West's "bastion" against this communist spectre, nazis were banking on the antagonism between the capitalist countries and the socialist Soviet Union to persuade the Western powers to lift their arms restrictions on Germany. They also counted on Western support in the planned war with the USSR.

This anti-communist provocation policy played on the capitalist states' internal class contradictions using the sprectre of the revolution as a scare, as well as contradictions existing between them and the Soviet Union.

Hitler's Germany withdrew from the League of Nations to prepare for war at a fast pace. In March 1935, it announced the creation of the Luftwaffe; on March 16, 1935, universal conscription was decreed. On March 7, 1936 Germany revoked the Locarno agreements and, in the absence of any resistance whatsoever from France and Great Britain, sent its troops in to occupy the de-militarised Rhine zone, thus moving its Wehrmacht right up to the French border. Not content with piecemeal economic militarisation measures, the Hitler government adopted a "Four-Year Plan", effective as of September 1936, to re-organise the entire economy along martial lines.

Meanwhile, fascist Italy hurriedly built up its arms stockpiles with an eye to invading Ethiopia. The Far East was fast becoming a powderkeg as the Japanese militarists stepped up their armaments drive to attack the Soviet Union and China.

Against this intricate and explosive international background, surrounded by its capitalist enemies, the Soviet Union carried on with the peaceful construction of a new, socialist society, coping with the demanding tasks set by the Party under the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-1937).

Heroic effort on the part of all Soviet people, led by the Communist Party, brought the plan's economic development targets in ahead of schedule. The working class, together with all the working people of the Soviet Union, accomplished a feat of labour unparalleled in history: in no time at all, without any outside help, they

[1] *Top Secret! Only for the High Command. Fascist Germany's Strategy in the War Against the USSR. Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 42-43 (in Russian).

transformed backward Russia into an advanced industrial power. By 1937, the gross heavy industrial product had risen to twice its 1932 and 8 times its 1913 level. For production volume, the USSR now ranked first in Europe and second only to the USA on the world scale.

During this period, the completion of collectivisation signalled the triumph of socialism in the countryside and the elimination of the Soviet Union's last capitalist class, the kulaks or rich, exploiting peasants.

Soviet industrialisation and the dynamic heavy industry base it created, were inseparably linked to national defence reinforcement, a crucial factor in the steady growth of the USSR's international prestige and influence. These historical achievements were enshrined in the new Soviet Constitution of 1936. The most democratic constitution in the world, it guaranteed Soviet citizens the right to work, rest and leisure, education, old-age security, etc., and inspired the working class in capitalist countries to fight for their rights, against the offensive of fascism, reaction and capital.

The year of 1933 marked a turning point in the Soviet Union's relationship with the capitalist states prompted chiefly by Soviet economic achievements and its enhanced international stature. In addition, the emergence of a war-mongering fascist bloc headed by Germany triggered a major reshuffling within the capitalist camp. Global repartition was the fascists' explicit goal.

The 13th Plenary Session of the Comintern Executive Committee, held from November 8 to December 12, 1933, discussed ways and means of combatting fascism and the imperialist war threat. It approved the theses "Fascism, the Danger of War and the Tasks Facing Communist Parties",[2] defining fascism as blatant terrorist dictatorship by the most reactionary, chauvinistic and imperialist elements of finance capital. Fascist Germany was branded as the chief European war monger.

From the platform of its 17th Congress, the Communist Party warned the whole world of the threat of imminent imperialist war. It noted that interstate imperialist contradictions had become so aggravated as to "pave the way for military clashes and promote war as a means of changing the world map and redistributing spheres of influence among the stronger states".[3]

It therefore became more and more urgent for the USSR and all peace-loving, progressive forces to take a stand against the war menace posed by the belligerent fascist powers.

This was the central issue discussed at the Seventh World Congress

[2] *The 13th Plenary Session of the Comintern Executive Committee. Minutes,* Moscow, 1934, pp. 4-18.

[3] *The 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks),* p.10.

of the Communist International, held in the summer of 1935 and attended by representatives from 65 national communist parties. Georgi Dimitrov made a report to the Congress, entitled "The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Fight for the Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism". In his concluding speech at the close of the Congress, Dimitrov stressed the importance of rallying all peace-loving forces. "Today, in addition to the working class, peasantry and all working people, the oppressed and weaker nations, whose independence is jeopardised by war, are speaking out for the preservation of peace.... The near future will depend on a consolidated and effective anti-war front. If it comes into being, it could be a mighty axe, cutting the fascist imperialist war mongers dead in their villainous tracks. Otherwise, they will unleash an imperialist war."[4] Every report made and collective resolution adopted at the Congress focused on the struggle against fascism and the war threat. To ensure its victory, the Communists would have to forge a single front of all workers, irrespective of political affiliation, a massive anti-fascist people's movement and, in the colonial and dependent countries, a solid anti-imperialist coalition.

From past experience, the Congress concluded that united workers' and popular fronts should set up governments in a number of capitalist countries, with Communist support and, where possible, participation.

The documents and resolutions of the Seventh Congress gave communist parties throughout the world a battle plan for their anti-fascist, anti-war struggle, the guidelines for organising a Popular Front dedicated to this end. In a number of countries, including Spain, France and Chile, fascist dictatorships were for a time blocked by Popular Front governments, and the campaign as a whole was to play an enormous role in the anti-war effort.[5]

Although Japan opened the first round of imperialist aggression with its Manchurian venture, German fascism was always the most dangerous predator. A resolution passed by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International reads: "German fascism is the main instigator of a new imperialist war and comes forward as the *shock troop of imperialist counter-revolution.*"[6] A second document

[4] G. Dimitrov, *The Struggle for a United Front Against Fascism and War. Articles and Speeches, 1935-1939*, Moscow, 1939, p. 94 (in Russian).

[5] For greater detail see: B. N. Ponomarev, "The Ideological Legacy of G. Dimitrov and Today's World", *Kommunist*, No. 9, 1972, pp. 21-22; the Opening Speech by M. A. Suslov and B. N. Ponomarev's Report to the Theoretical Conference on the Fortieth Anniversary of the Seventh Comintern Congress, *Kommunist*, No. 11, 1975, pp. 3-28.

[6] *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, Moscow-Leningrad, 1935, p. 14.

proclaims: "The German fascists, who strive for the hegemony of German imperialism in Europe, raise the question of changing the boundaries of Europe at the expense of their neighbours, by means of war."[7]

The Congress papers and resolutions also emphasise the role played by British imperialism in fostering anti-Soviet aggressive designs of the fascist powers. The resolution points out: "Great Britain is striving ... to strengthen the anti-Soviet tendencies not only of Germany but also of Japan and Poland."[8] The Congress accordingly warned that "although the acuteness of the imperialist contradictions renders the formation of an anti-Soviet bloc difficult at the present moment, the fascist governments and war parties in the capitalist countries endeavour to solve these contradictions at the expense of the fatherland of all toilers, at the expense of the Soviet Union. The danger of the outbreak of a new imperialist war daily threatens humanity."[9]

Moreover, the Congress observed that Soviet economic advance and enhanced defence potential had launched a new phase in the USSR's relations with the capitalist countries, even though "the basic contradiction, that between the socialist and capitalist world, has become still more acute".[10]

Be that as it may, the Soviet Union was still under threat of attack. As the militaristic powers, headed by Germany, built up their arsenals and the leading Western states (Great Britain, the USA and France) turned a blind eye to their acts of aggression and annexation, the danger grew. In rapid succession, Japan seized Manchuria, Italy invaded and colonised Ethiopia, while Germany and Italy sent interventionist troops into Spain to overthrow the republican government of the Popular Front.

In its resolution of April 1, 1936, the Presidium of the Comintern Executive Committee stated that fascism "now menaced every country in the world", that "warmongers from the West and the East, in total collaboration, are threatening to draw the entire planet into a merciless, destructive war."[11]

On November 6, 1936, at the Octover Revolution Anniversary session of the Moscow Soviet, M.I. Kalinin delivered a report exposing the aggressive designs harboured by the fascist powers. He remarked that they "continued to pursue an ultra-provocative foreign policy, deliberately fanning international tension, a policy spearheaded against the Soviet Union.... Their goal was an all-fascist international

[7] *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International*, p. 36.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p. 38.

[10] Ibid.

[11] *Seventh Congress of the Communist International and the Struggle Against Fascism and War. A Collection of Documents*, Moscow, 1975, p. 421 (in Russian).

front."[12] This "all-fascist" bloc took shape gradually: the "Berlin-Rome Axis" or German-Italian treaty of 1936 was followed, in November of the same year, by the "Anti-Comintern Pact", so called to camouflage the aggressive intentions of its co-signatories, Germany and Japan. The latter was directed against both the Soviet Union and the leading Western powers, for a secret supplementary clause pledged policy coordination vis-à-vis the USSR. When Italy joined the pact, the bilateral agreement became a tripartite militaristic coalition.

The Soviet government exposed the pact as a prewar alliance aimed at territorial expansion. In late November 1936, in a speech before the Eighth Extraordinary Congress of Soviets, V.M. Molotov, Chairman of the USSR Council of People's Commissars, observed that the German-Italian alliance was essentially no different from any other imperialist aggressive coalition: "We must state directly that we are fully aware of the true nature of this treaty. We share the world-wide alarm it has raised for the cause of peace."[13]

At the same Congress, M.M. Litvinov, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, warned Western statesmen that the policy pursued by the fascist powers jeopardised England and France, that the farcical "non-interference" strategy would turn against its architects.

As for the Soviet stance, Litvinov saw no need to change a policy which had always and would forever champion peace: "The Soviet Union wants peace for itself and for other nations. It therefore offers its assistance and expects in return not speeches, but concrete action to secure peace."[14]

In the editorial "The Foreign Policy of the USSR Is Immutable! ", published that same day in *Pravda*, the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the Soviet government reaffirmed their commitment to the policy of peace and their readiness to join all like-minded states for its defence.

The Soviet Union did its utmost to point out the danger posed by the allied war-mongering powers and their unmistakably aggressive ambitions.

Of the Soviet government's peace efforts, M.I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, said: "This year, as in the past, we have shown again and again that our foreign policy is grounded in principle and consistently pursues the development and reinforcement of peaceful relations among all countries. We believe this to be one of the most important objectives in international politics, a matter of vital concern to the masses. Despite fierce resistance from the proponents of violence, our policy

[12] *Pravda*, November 10, 1936.
[13] *Pravda*, November 30, 1936.
[14] *Pravda*, November 29, 1936.

is rallying ever more champions of peace throughout the world."[15] By no means did this imply that the war threat had subsided. As Kalinin pointed out at the time, "the storm clouds of war are gathering".

The crisis drew closer and closer. In the *Pravda* editorial for New Year's Day, 1937, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union alerted the Soviet people and the international working class to the impending threat of war: "Heavy storm clouds have blown up on the horizon of 1937. The fascist countries are brewing a predatory war.... In terror of defeat, the other bourgeois governments grasp at the straw of outward peace and encourage the fascist plunder through inaction."[16]

Japan's invasion of Northern China demonstrated the consequences of the British, American and French "non-interference" policy towards the fascist powers.

The Executive Committee of the Comintern issued repeated warnings on the gathering danger of war. In 1937, for example, General Secretary Dimitrov wrote: "With their 'Red Menace' battle-cry against the Comintern, the German, Italian and Japanese pirates are using local wars to seize key military bases, sea ports, overland junctions and raw material centres—strategic points for their war industries to scale up the imperialist war."[17]

To all intents and purposes, this war was already being fought on two continents, Europe and Asia. *Izvestia* summed up the current international situation as follows: "With wars blazing on two ends, the culprits continue to conspire."[18]

The Western powers' indulgent attitude to aggression aggravated international tension throughout 1937.

By late November, the Soviet government was obliged to reveal that London and Paris had turned down its proposal for a joint stand against fascist belligerence. The announcement was made by Litvinov, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, on the 27th: "Wherever possible, even when Soviet interests were not in the least involved, we have indicated our readiness to join the other great powers and the smaller nations as well, in a common, anti-war front. But to date, no such accord has been reached."[19]

London and Paris still thought they could come to terms with fascist Germany. The pitfalls of such a course of action were obvious even to some bourgeois politicians and journalists. From the pages of *L'Aurore*, for example, the well-known French journalist Émile Buré condemned those who advocated a deal with Germany under the

[15] *Pravda*, November 10, 1936.
[16] *Pravda*, January 1, 1937.
[17] G. M. Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Sofia, 1967, p. 780.
[18] *Izvestia*, November 11, 1937.
[19] *Pravda*, November 29, 1937.

pretext that this was the only way to avoid war. Buré maintained that the danger of war would only recede when Britain, France and the Soviet Union agree to rally every country jeopardised by Germany. And no sooner. These rosy plans for Franco-German alignment would meet the same fate as all their forerunners.[20]

The Soviet press alerted the world public to the Western statesmen's fatal error in seeking a bargain with the aggressive fascist powers. A case in point is *Pravda's* appraisal of the London-Paris strategy: "In negotiating with, and making concessions to, the aggressors the European bourgeois-democratic powers undermine the smaller states' faith in the League of Nations and collective security. They are playing straight into the warmongers' hands, when the firm opposition of a solid, multinational peace front could easily call them to order. The blatant aggressors are not nearly so strong as they would have others believe."[21]

Dimitrov also warned of the threat hanging over all mankind: "The threat of a second world war looms ever closer. It would have broken out long ago, had there not been such a mighty champion of peace as the Soviet Union, had a solid, anti-fascist and anti-war popular front not emerged and gathered strength in the capitalist countries."[22]

Unfortunately, all these grave warnings were ignored by Western statesmen who held fast to their policy of appeasement. War was now inevitable. "These are tense times," wrote *Pravda* in December 1937. "Capitalism hopes to escape its doom through war. It is already fighting. This past year has been a year of unbridled aggression on the part of the fascist predators."[23]

The USSR Struggles to Keep the Peace as the War Threat Mounts

In the complex international situation of 1933-1937, the Communist Party and the Soviet government based their foreign policy on the guidelines set down in the Central Committee Report to the 17th Party Congress. They kept a close watch on world politics, warning statesmen, the international working class and all peace-loving people that war was just around the corner. The USSR used every means at its disposal to fight back the war threat. It approached the countries who stood for peace, exposing those who paid it only lip service, while in fact promoting war.

[20] Quoted in *Pravda*, December 24, 1937.
[21] *Pravda*, December 17, 1937.
[22] *Pravda*, December 11, 1937.
[23] *Pravda*, December 31, 1937.

Soviet efforts were concentrated on convincing the leading European powers, Great Britain and France, of the necessity for joint action to defend the world against aggression.

London and Paris, however, turned a deaf ear to Soviet warnings and counted on striking a deal with the aggressors.

Ruling circles in the West were quite prepared to listen to militant anti-Soviet statements when the German nazis and Japanese militarists, the self-proclaimed "soldiers against Communism", called for an attack on the USSR to "stamp out the Red Menace".

These anti-Soviet schemes met with a particularly sympathetic approval of the British power elite, who had similar plans of their own. The united imperialist bloc they envisaged would isolate the Soviet Union from world affairs, undermine its spreading international influence and eventually overthrow its socialist order to restore capitalism. To this end, an alliance with the fascist powers, Germany and Italy, as well as Japan, was proposed. Such was the stratagem devised by the ultra-reactionary wing of the Conservative Party, the so-called Clivden Clique, and its most prominent members Neville Chamberlain, John Simon, Kingsley Wood, Lord Halifax and Samuel Hoare. Even Winston Churchill supported their line until 1934.[24]

In late 1933, *Bolshevik*, the theoretical and political organ of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Central Committee, described the Clivden scheme as follows: "Phase One of the British diehards' plan is to push Japan into war with the USSR. The resulting state of affairs will supposedly show the other imperialist powers that Western armed intervention in the USSR is such a simple, sure-fire venture that it makes sense to form a united imperialist anti-Soviet front."[25]

The Seventh Comintern Congress exposed the real motive behind the British anti-Soviet line: "The necessity to wage a struggle in order to maintain its colonial domination, a struggle against revolution and against national liberation movements, remains today, too, the principal mainspring of British policy."[26]

Closely connected to British hopes for an Anglo-German agreement, the anti-Soviet policy aimed to satisfy the fascists' territorial claims at the expense of the USSR. The trend was unmistakable in the "Pact of Four" scheme energetically pursued by British diplomacy. This "treaty of accord and cooperation" was intended to give Germany full parity with England, France and Italy in decision-making on all European and world issues. In effect, it would have resurrected the

[24] I. M. Maisky, *Who Helped Hitler (Excerpts from a Soviet Ambassador's Memoirs)*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 35, 54-59, 61, 63-64 (in Russian).

[25] *Bolshevik*, No. 11, 1933, p. 10.

[26] *Seventh Congress of the Communist International and the Struggle Against Fascism and War*, p. 247.

infamous "Holy Alliance" to run international affairs without Soviet participation. Clearly an anti-Soviet camp, the Four would have thrust the USSR into virtual international quarantine. It was, as *Pravda* commented, an imperialist pact, directed against the USSR: "For the working people of the USSR and the whole world there is no doubt that the 'Pact of Four' is anti-Soviet in its very conception.... The diehards will not be able to flow up a diplomatic smokescreen to hide their interventionist schemes."[27]

The Clivden Clique was opposed by a group of English politicians who favoured normal relations with the USSR and the expanded trade and economic ties urgently needed by the British economy. In their opinion, Great Britain, France and the USSR had to take a stand against Nazi Germany. Its most prominent spokesmen were A. Duff Cooper, Amery, Lord Beaverbrook, Lloyd-George and, from 1934 on, Winston Churchill.[28]

Highly unstable Anglo-Soviet relations between 1933 and 1937 reflected the sharp debate in London's government circles over the direction to be taken by British policy on the USSR and fascist Germany. In 1933, the British government had been forced, by public opinion and moderate lobbyists, to lift its embargo on Soviet imports. The same pressure was behind Lord Privy Seal Anthony Eden's visit to Moscow in March 1935, where he was received by Stalin and Molotov. As the talks progressed, Eden could not help but recognise the significance of the Soviet proposal for a European collective security system. More importantly, he approved of the Soviet plan for an Eastern Pact. The Soviet leaders called his attention to the aggressive bent of nazi Germany's foreign policy, as well as its armaments drive. They repeatedly emphasised Great Britain's important role in preserving peace in Europe and throughout the world. To cite but one example, when Eden compared the vast expanse of the Soviet Union to the small isle known as the United Kingdom, Stalin replied: "It may well be a small island, but a great deal depends on it. If this small island were to say to Germany: 'I shan't give you any money, raw materials or metal,' European peace would be ensured."[29]

Eden's visit resulted in an Anglo-Soviet communiqué, signed in Moscow, which bound both countries to a policy of peace and collective security. It marked a signal success for Soviet diplomacy for its active defence of peace. On the British side, however, the subsequent turn of events showed the communiqué to be a mere tactical manoeuvre, intended to put pressure on Hitler's Germany, impede Franco-Soviet rapprochement and quiet the public demand for

[27] *Pravda*, June 10, 1933.

[28] I. M. Maisky, op. cit., pp. 61-64.

[29] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVIII, Moscow, 1973, pp. 250-51.

improved Anglo-Soviet relations.[30]

Nazi Germany's flagrant war preparations could not but alarm certain government circles in the West. Even there a number of politicians were not blinded by anti-communism or anti-Soviet hostility to the seriousness of the German menace. On February 5, 1936, for example, the British Secretary of War, Duff Cooper, in a conversation with Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London, admitted that Hitler, with his systematic arms drive, put Britain in jeopardy. For this reason, Duff Cooper declared, any concession to Germany could only reinforce the nazis' aggressive ambitions; the key issue now was to create a united front for collective security. But Duff Cooper was well aware of the fact that his views did not represent the opinion of his government. When asked by Maisky if he believed Britain and the Soviet Union would sign a mutual assistance treaty, his answer was a negative: "The British public is not yet ready for such a step."[31]

Seeing the war threat crescendo, the Soviet Union reiterated its offers to cooperate with the capitalist countries who spoke out for peace.

At its 17th Congress, the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) declared that the USSR strove for peace and international cooperation. It also warned those who fanned the fires of war: "Our foreign policy is clear," read the Central Committee Report to the Congress. "It aims for peace and stronger trade ties with all countries. The USSR does not intend to threaten any nation whatsoever.... We stand for peace and we defend the cause of peace. But we are not intimidated by threats. We are ready to answer the war mongers blow for blow."[32]

The Party leadership and the Soviet government were fully alert to the USSR's complicated international position during the 1930s. They paid great attention to Hitler's feverish armaments campaign and the sharp deterioration in Soviet-German relations his policies provoked. For all their vociferous anti-communist sabre-rattling, Hitler and his foreign policy advisers could not declare war on the USSR until Germany was fully armed; this, however, would delay hostilities by several years.

Quite the reverse was true of the situation in the Far East, where Japan's occupation of Manchuria had, to all intents and purposes, put the aggressor right on the USSR's doorstep. Under the façade of the puppet Manchukuo government headed by Pu Yi, Manchuria became a convenient base for a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union. The Japanese war menace grew steadily more serious, as the imperial-

[30] V. I. Popov, *Anglo-Soviet Diplomatic Relations (1929-1939)*, Moscow, 1965, p. 191 (in Russian).

[31] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XIX, Moscow, 1974, pp. 62-64.

[32] *The 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, p. 14.

ists had their sights set on seizing the entire Soviet Far East.

In 1933, the Japanese-Manchurian authorities stepped up provocation activities aimed at paralysing the Chinese Eastern Railway, a trunk line belonging to the Soviet Union. This, they hoped, would either force the USSR to renounce its property, to make a virtual present of the railroad to the Japanese militarists, or gradually incite a Russo-Japanese war and its eventual seizure by force. Japanese-Manchurian violations of the Soviet border also increased. L.M. Karakhan, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, summed up the international picture for 1933 in his letter of March 3, to the CPSU (B) Central Committee: "To my mind, there's no doubt that war between the USSR and Japan offers the USA and the European powers the perfect solution to the crisis and the Far East question. They will try to push us into it." Karakhan went on to discuss the possibility of open conflict. In such an event, he predicted, the USA, Great Britain, France and others would use the League of Nations to turn the world public against the USSR: "If war breaks out, all current resolutions and international alignments, the anti-Japanese front—all this will be tossed out of the window and the only issue left will be how to profit from this war, how to scramble out of the crisis and the contradictions besetting the capitalist world at the Soviet Union's expense."[33]

Accordingly, the Party and the USSR government decided to advise the Soviet peoples and the world public of the impending Japanese attack. On December 25, 1933, Stalin issued statement to this effect, in an interview with *The New York Times* correspondent Duranty. He pointed out the danger of militaristic elements getting the upper hand in Japanese politics: "This is a real menace, and one we must prepare for. In my opinion, it would be foolhardy of Japan to attack the USSR."[34] Thus, venturesome sorts in Japan were warned in no uncertain terms that the Soviet Union recognised their threat and was ready to repel any attack, should the aggressor risk war.

On December 29, 1933, at a session of the USSR Central Executive Committee, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs made the following comment on the precarious turn the Japanese had wrought in Soviet-Japanese relations: "These relations have caused great concern not only in the Soviet Union but all over the world, for Japan's tactics are now the blackest storm clouds on the international political horizon."[35]

The 17th Party Congress warned that the Japanese were about to

[33] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the CC CPSU(B), March 3, 1933.

[34] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVI, Moscow, 1970, p. 767.

[35] Ibid., p. 793.

unleash war on the Far East.[36] On April 22, 1934, Litvinov spoke to the American Ambassador on just this subject: "Since Japan has encountered no obstacles to its aggressive ambitions thus far, we are certain since we know Japan that it will continue to pursue the same course."[37]

As the USSR Embassy in Tokyo noted in its report on Japan's policy on the Soviet Union, "1933 saw Soviet-Japanese relations at their most strained. Tension ran particularly high in the autumn, when Japan actually attempted to seize the Chinese Eastern Railway and its military clique's campaign for war on the Soviet Union reached a peak."[38] The report also stressed that Japan had turned down Soviet proposals for a non-aggression pact because it wanted to "keep the war threat alive so as to blackmail the Soviet government into ceding to its key demands (on fishing rights, concessions, recognition for Manchukuo, the CER sale, etc.)". It did not intend to "tie itself down to a non-aggression pact in case it should find it necessary to attack the USSR".[39]

All these machinations sought but one goal: to whip up as much tension as possible. This would permit Janan to open hostilities against the USSR at its convenience, using its Manchurian base.

The Soviet response combined a firm stand against Japanese aggression with constructive policies and the diplomatic flexibility required to eliminate points of contention. In the spring of 1933, for example, the Soviet government, on its own initiative, approached the Japanese and the Manchurians to open negotiations on the CER sale. Within Japan itself, the Soviet proposal stole the war mongers' thunder and, conversely, lent new vigour to those who stood for keeping peace with the USSR. Indeed, it was the USSR's willingness to settle all disputes at the conference table that helped avert war with Japan in the 1930s.

The February 1936 military coup in Japan did little to stabilise Soviet-Japanese relations. On December 8 and 9, 1936, in his conversations with Shigemitsu, Japanese Ambassador to Moscow, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs remarked that the USSR-Manchurian border was the most restless of all the Soviet frontiers. Litvinov particularly stressed Japan's raids on Soviet territory and its obdurate refusal to sign a non-aggression pact. Add these factors to anti-Soviet expansionist agitation in the Japanese press, he concluded, and it is no

[36] *The 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, p. 14.

[37] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Ambassador of the USA in Moscow, 22 April, 1934.

[38] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. 1933 Year-End Report of the Soviet Embassy in Japan.

[39] Ibid.

wonder that the USSR was forced to concentrate large defence contingents in the Far East.[40] In his letter of 7 January 1937 to the Soviet Ambassador in Japan, the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, B.S. Stomonyakov, outlined Japan's policy on the USSR: "Influenced by the military clique, Japan has grown still more hostile to the Sovet Union. All aspects of Soviet-Japanese relations are affected."[41]

The CPSU (B) Central Committee Report to the 17th Party Congress defined the Soviet position on Japan: "We shall persist in our policy of peace and improved relations with Japan, for it is our wish to stabilise the situation."[42] This, however, required the joint effort of both the USSR and Japan and, unfortunately, the latter was not in the least interested.

The Party leadership and the Soviet government did not ignore the radical change in the international situation caused by the emergence of a group of aggressive fascist states seeking global repartition by force. They had no doubt that the Soviet Union was the key target of their aggressive designs. Indeed, imperialists in both major aggressive powers, Germany and Japan, directed their call to arms specifically against the USSR and were supported, in their aim of a multinational anti-Soviet coalition, by reactionaries throughout the world.

Nevertheless, with its brilliantly successful industrialisation drive, the triumph of socialism, enhanced defence potential and Leninist policy of peace and active resistance to fascism, the Soviet Union's international prestige climbed. It was in the 1930s that the USSR became an outstanding champion of peace in Europe and the world at large. As *Izvestia* wrote on August 1, 1935: "That the USSR is the main stronghold of peace is now recognised not only by hundreds of millions of working people the world over but as well by those governments and bourgeois parties who have no vested interest in war at present. This is the work of both its international political strategy and the real might behind it."

The Party and the Soviet government persistently exposed the fascist powers' aggressive ambitions and their threat to the freedom of many a European nation. Their efforts won high praise from the Seventh Comintern Congress: "The peace policy of the USSR has not only upset the plans of the imperialists to isolate the Soviet Union, but has laid the basis for its cooperation in the cause of the preser-

[40] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the Japanese Ambassador, Shigemitsu, December 8 and 9, 1936.

[41] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR to the Soviet Ambassador in Japan, January 7, 1937.

[42] *The 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, p. 14.

vation of peace with the small states to whom war represents a special danger, by placing their independence in jeopardy, as well as with those governments which at the present moment are interested in the preservation of peace."[43]

Gradually, astute bourgeois statesmen were convinced it would be impossible to solve major European and world issues without Soviet participation.

That a number of capitalist states now established diplomatic relations with the USSR speaks volumes for its growing international prestige. Among these, the USA deserves special mention.

Long after the leading capitalist countries had recognised and exchanged ambassadors with the Soviet government, the American ruling circles, the most vociferous anti-Soviet spokesmen, had stubbornly refused to follow suit. Neither unfavourable coincidence nor material claims on the Soviet government, connected with its revolutionary decrees, motivated this stance. It was exclusively a matter of principle. America "in effect, carried on the struggle proclaimed after the October Revolution by the entire capitalist world against the new Soviet order and its goal of a socialist society. It fought against the peaceful co-existence of two systems."[44] It took the USA a full 16 years to recognise the USSR, and even then it did so reluctantly. Washington held on to the hope that British diplomats would persuade the German and Italian fascist dictators to form an anti-Soviet bloc, envisaged as the "Pact of Four". That the American government favoured such a scheme was confirmed by the Italian Ambassador in Moscow who, on April 29, 1933, spoke to Litvinov. "The US State Department has informed us, " the latter reported, "that the American government has no objections to the Pact of Four. On the contrary, it is sympathetic to the negotiations, though it cannot take part in these or any other discussions on European affairs."[45]

But the "Pact of Four" fell through. The USSR's consistent struggle for peace had won it broad international recognition, and it was no longer possible to ignore the Soviet voice in world issues. This was the key factor prompting the American government to re-examine its USSR policy—it was a sign of the times.

By late 1933, the Americans could not help but realise that such aggressive states as Germany and Japan jeopardised their own country as well. When Japan's belligerent tactics encroached on American interests in the Far East, the US government was forced to turn to the Soviet Union. In his memoirs, Cordell Hull, Secretary of State at the

[43] *Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. Resolutions and Decisions*, p. 39.

[44] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVI, p. 786.

[45] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the Italian Ambassador in Moscow, April 23, 1933.

time, explains the American policy shift: "The world is moving into a dangerous period, both in Europe and in Asia. Russia could be a great help in stabilizing this situation as time goes on and peace becomes more and more threatened."[46]

In 1932 and 1933, the American government was faced with a powerful domestic movement for normalising relations with the USSR. Even the business community joined in, for non-recognition had hampered Soviet-American economic cooperation and trade. Finally, during the Roosevelt Administration, the problem was solved. On October 10, 1933, the President wrote to M. I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, that he was ready to start discussing the restoration of diplomatic relations.[47]

On October 19, Kalinin replied. A breach between their two countries, he declared, was detrimental not only to both, but to the general world situation as well. The Soviet government therefore accepted the American offer and appointed Commissar for Foreign Affairs Litvinov its chief internuncio.[48] On November 16, 1933, Litvinov and Roosevelt exchanged letters summing up the fruits of their negotiations.[49] Litvinov wrote: "I, too, share the hope that the relations now established between our peoples may forever remain normal and friendly, and that our nations henceforth may cooperate for their mutual benefit and for the preservation of the peace of the world."[50]

The Central Committee Report to the 17th Party Congress made the following comment on the restoration of Soviet-American diplomatic relations: "There is no doubt but that this act is of enormous significance to the entire international system. It is not only a matter of raising the chances for peace, improving relations between the two states, reinforcing their trade ties and creating the basis for mutual cooperation. It marks the watershed between the past, when various countries thought of the USA as a bastion for all sorts of anti-Soviet tendencies, and the future now that this bastion has been voluntarily torn down to the benefit of both countries."[51]

Improved Soviet-American diplomatic relations had a beneficial impact on the establishment of economic ties. No less significant was the Soviet-American trade agreement of 1937, based on the

[46] *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. 1, The Macmillan Company, New York,1948, p. 297.

[47] *Soviet-American Relations, 1919-1933*, Moscow, 1934, p. 76 (in Russian).

[48] Ibid.

[49] *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers. The Soviet Union 1933-1939*, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1952, p. 28.

[50] Ibid.

[51] *The 17th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, p. 14.

most-favoured-nation principle. In the summer of 1937, friendship between the two states was cemented by a landmark event. Three Soviet pilots, Valery Chkalov, Georgy Baydukov and Alexei Belyakov, made the first non-stop trans-Polar flight to the United States, where they were enthusiastically received by the American people. At a meeting held in New York to celebrate this heroic feat, Chkalov announced that his aircraft had brought greetings from 170 million Soviet well-wishers. A congratulatory telegram from President Roosevelt was followed by a reception in the White House.*

In the long run, however, US policy was to be swayed by the opponents of Soviet-American cooperation in the peace movement. Invoking the Neutrality Act ratified by Congress in 1935, the United States announced it would not interfere in European affairs, which amounted to giving the fascist powers a free hand in their acts of aggression and militant preparations for global repartition.

The American government was fully aware of the bellicose schemes being laid in Hitler's camp. On October 11, 1937, for example, the US Assistant Secretary of State Messersmith outlined Germany's plans as follows: it would seize Austria and Czechoslovakia, establish German domination in South-East Europe, take over the Ukraine, isolate Russia, paralyse France by forcing it to dissolve the Franco-Russian alliance, gradually dismember the British Empire and, finally, move on the USA.[52] And still Washington approved of the "non-interference" line taken by London and Paris, hoping that "France, Britain and America could remain neutral while Fascism and Communism destroyed one another".[53]

Soviet diplomacy scored signal success in developing friendly ties with the Eastern countries of Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey. When in late 1933, K.Y. Voroshilov and L.M. Karakhan visited Turkey, Soviet-Turkish relations markedly improved.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the Spanish Republic was an event of international import. Between 1933 and 1935, a host of countries, including Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Belgium and Columbia, recognised the Soviet government. All this testified to the growing Soviet role in world politics.

* Thirty-eight years later, the people of Vancouver, where the redwinged ANT-25 had landed, commemorated the Soviet pilots' feat by raising funds to erect a monument and lay out a Chkalov Memorial Park. Baidukov, Belyakov—by then Heroes of the Soviet Union—and Chkalov's son were among the Soviet representatives invited to the grand opening, held on June 20, 1975. Every speaker stressed the necessity for Soviet-American cooperation. Finally, US President Gerald Ford hosted a reception to honour the Soviet pilots.

52 See: *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers, 1937*, Vol. I, General, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1954, pp. 140-45.

53 Frederick L. Schuman, *Soviet Politics at Home and Abroad*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1946, p. 282.

Soviet Proposals for Peace and Cooperation with the Capitalist Countries

The Soviet government has always considered arms reduction the best means of strengthening peace. Accordingly, when its project for universal and complete disarmament put forward at the Geneva Disarmament Conference was rejected by the leading capitalist powers, the USSR launched a second initiative for international security. On 6 February 1933, it submitted a draft "Declaration on the Definition of the Aggressor" to the Geneva delegates. Had the Soviet proposal been adopted, it would have put maximum restraints on all acts of aggression. It argued that the question as to which side had first resorted to armed force should be taken as the principal criterion, and the actual declaration or non-declaration of war discarded as irrelevant.

Paragraph 1 of the draft laid down a precise definition of the aggressor, viz: A country which declares war on another sovereign state or, failing that, dispatches armed forces to invade the other's territory, bomb it, attack its sea vessels or impose a naval blockade on its shores or ports.[54]

Paragraph 2 was extremely important: "No political, strategic or economic considerations, neither the attempt to exploit the natural resources of the country under attack or secure any other advantages or privileges, nor reference to major capital investments or any other special interests therein, nor the refusal to recognise its sovereignty, can justify aggression."[55]

Each of the over 16 typical "justifications" listed in the Declaration was pronounced invalid.[56]

It was in the vital interests of all nations to adopt the Soviet project immediately, for the Declaration could have become a new weapon in the peace movement to save mankind from bloodshed and reinforce international security.

Still, it met a more than icy response among the leading capitalist countries. Great Britain and Italy set the tone at the Conference, while the British delegate was the Declaration's most outspoken critic. In the end, the Western powers managed to postpone its adoption, shelving it under the pretext of seeking the approval of the League of Nations Committee.

Be that as it may, the very fact that the Soviet Union presented such a proposal at an international conference was of major signi-

[54] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVI, p. 80.

[55] Ibid., p. 81.

[56] Ibid.; see also *The History of the USSR from the Ancient Past to the Present Day*, Vol. IX, *Socialist Construction in the USSR. 1933-1941*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 30-32; V. Y. Sipols, *The Soviet Union's Struggle for Peace and Security. 1933-1939*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 39-40 (both in Russian).

ficance to the peace movement. It offered the world a means of ensuring that unilateral aggression would never go unpunished, and public opinion paid it due tribute by calling the project "Charter of Freedom of Nations".

When the Soviet Union saw that the Disarmament Conference would never ratify its "Declaration on the Definition of the Aggressor", it took new steps towards the same end—though on a reduced scale—by suggesting its neighbouring countries hold their own talks on the project. On April 19, 1933, Litvinov first made such proposal to J. Lukasiewicz, the Polish Ambassador in Moscow. Litvinov maintained that the Geneva Conference red tape would long delay proper review of the draft and asked the Ambassador: "Since Poland and our other neighbours were interested in our proposal in Geneva, would they meet and sign a protocol of agreement?" This step was intended to promote trust between the USSR and its neighbours. As Litvinov noted, it "would pour oil on the troubled waters of the present international situation and ultimately encourage Geneva to adopt our proposal".[57]

But the Polish government's initial response was negative, since even then it was moving towards alignment with nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union turned to its other neighbours. Negotiations were continued at the World Economic Conference held in London in July 1933. At last its persistence prevailed: Estonia, Latvia, Turkey, Persia, Romania, Afghanistan, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Lithuania signed the Soviet Declaration on defining the aggressor. In a statement released at the signing ceremonies, the Soviet government indicated its readiness "to conclude similar conventions with any country, irrespective of its geographic position and current relations with the USSR".[58] Once again, it had demonstrated its sincere and active desire for peace. Finland subsequently joined the signatories.

In its continuing struggle for peace, world security and broader international cooperation, the Soviet government put yet another proposal before the World Economic Conference in London. The extensive programme envisaged included: (1) normalising relations with the capitalist countries on the basis of the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence and (2) expanding peaceful economic cooperation with the capitalist countries.

At the June 14, 1933 session, the Soviet delegate re-affirmed his country's unswerving adherence to the peaceful coexistence principle.[59]

[57] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, April 29, 1933.

[58] *Izvestia*, July 5, 1933.

[59] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVI, p. 348.

The worldwide economic crisis had plunged the capitalist countries into depression and unleashed a truly merciless trade war for sellers' markets and raw material sources. On this account, the USSR proposed a protocol on economic non-aggression, a commercial ceasefire so to speak, for peaceful cooperation between countries of varying social and economic systems.[60]

At a later session, the Soviet delegate recommended the Conference repeal all sanctions "entailing economic aggression and discrimination, such as trade boycotts, bans, special import duties or export-import conditions levied on goods shipped to or from any country whatsoever".[61] By way of confirming its willingness to cooperate with the capitalist countries, the Soviet government announced that, if granted the necessary credit, it could "in the near future place some 1,000 million dollars' worth of orders abroad".[62]

Against this constructive Soviet programme for peace and business cooperation, fascist Germany's policy takes on an especially cynical light. Hitler's Minister of the Economy Hugenberg circulated a memorandum among the delegates at the London conference, calling for a common effort to annihilate "revolution and internal decay [which had] made a beginning in Russia". Hugenberg also claimed Russian territory for German colonisation.[63]

In thus revealing the aggressive ambitions harboured by nazi Germany, the memorandum alarmed the European nations. Not a single delegate responded to its proposal for a multinational capitalist crusade on the Soviet Union. Instead, Berlin was forced to retreat; it "withdrew" the memorandum and announced it had been the personal handiwork of Hugenberg. All the same, Hitler's diplomacy had overplayed its hand, for its machinations further emphasised the truly peaceful and constructive nature of the Soviet programme. Its proposals for multilateral expansion of economic ties with the capitalist countries met the vital needs of all nations and were therefore acclaimed by public opinion the world over.

Though an important step, the development of trade and economic cooperation was not the only means of preserving peace and security. One of the alternative avenues explored by the Soviet government was the International Disarmament Conference, where negotiations had long since bogged down. The USSR moved that the Conference condemn aggressive and expansionist propaganda on the armed seizure

[60] Ibid., pp. 343-48.

[61] Ibid., p. 349.

[62] *Izvestia*, June 24, 1933.

[63] *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series C, *The Third Reich: First Phase*, Vol. I, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1957, p. 567.

of other countries' territory.[64]

In view of the rising international tension, a second Soviet proposal urged that "the Conference become a permanent peace forum, meeting at regular intervals", with a mandate to "prevent war and its grave consequences". It should elaborate and improve methods for preserving security, respond without delay to the danger signs of war and SOS signals from imperiled countries, rendering them fast, unstinting assistance, be it moral, economic, financial or otherwise.[65]

Great Britain, the USA and other capitalist powers, however, declined to support this Soviet initiative as well, burying it under reams of procedural fine print.

"Don't wait for peace, fight for it! " cried the Soviet motto. On this immutable principle, the Party and the Soviet government put their entire foreign policy behind isolating the aggressors, mercilessly exposing the instigators of armed conflicts and their supporters, whose hypocritical peace-loving sighs masked a collaborationist stance of non-resistance. To this end, they used every means at their disposal—the press, the radio, diplomacy, growing Soviet prestige and influence. To nations and governments concerned with peace, to the world public at large, they explained that only a common front for concerted effort would halt the march of war.

In order to rally the champions of peace, the Soviet Union spared no effort to uncover the fascist lie, supported by imperialist reactionaries, that communism, not fascism and war, was the true threat, that the aggressive fascist powers were "knights" against the "Red Menace".

The Party, the Soviet government, diplomatic corps and press, tirelessly explained that the Great Divide of our times lay not between fascism and communism, but between war and peace. It split the globe in two. Soviet foreign policy strove to mobilise all peace-loving forces for a frontal assault on war. For this very reason, the Soviet government advanced the world-famous slogan "Peace is indivisible", based on the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence for different socio-economic systems.

The Soviet Collective Security Programme. Formulation and Implementation (1933-1935)

The Soviet Union acted on the premise that only universal, total disarmament would guarantee peace. Since their proposals to this effect had been rejected by the Geneva Disarmament Conference, since the fascist states had thrown their arms race into full gear,

[64] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVII, Moscow, 1971, pp. 356-57.
[65] Ibid., pp. 358-59.

bringing the danger of war still closer, the Party and the Soviet government had to seek new means to avert the fascist threat. In December 1933, the Central Committee adopted its historical resolution on developing an effective collective security system to protect Europe from aggression.[66] The guiding principle was collective defence of an "indivisible peace". The Soviet Union believed that this was an entirely feasible means of safeguarding all peoples; a realistic measure acceptable to all countries devoted to the cause of peace, capitalist and socialist alike.

In accordance with the Central Committee resolution, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs drew up a detailed plan for a European collective security system. Approved by the Central Committee Politburo on December 20, 1933, the plan included the following points:

"(1) The USSR consents to join the League of Nations provided certain conditions are met.

"(2) The USSR has no objections to a regional treaty for mutual defence against German aggression, to be contracted within the League of Nations framework.

"(3) The USSR consents to Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland or several of the above, as co-signatories of such a treaty, provided France and Poland take part.

"(4) Negotiations to specify obligations under the future mutual defence convention may be opened by France, as the project sponsor, on submitting a draft treaty.

"(5) Irrespective of the obligations entered into under such treaty, in the event of armed attack unforeseen by the same, its participants are bound to render each other diplomatic, moral and, where possible, material assistance, as well as exert the appropriate influence on their respective press organs."

Point 6 stipulated amendments to Articles 12 and 13 of the League of Nations Covenant, concerning mandatory arbitration enquiries. The Soviet Union particularly objected to Article 12, Paragraph 1, Part 2, which sanctioned war as a means of resolving international disputes. The Soviet plan also demanded that racial and national equality be recognised for all members of the League of Nations. This key point derived, in turn, from one of the central tenets of the Leninist nationalities doctrine. The final point stated: "The USSR will insist that all League members who have not done so to date extend it *de jure* recognition or, at the very least, that the League Charter be amended to include, or a League Session adopt, a resolution to the

[66] *A History of World War II, 1939-1945*, in 12 volumes, Vol. I, Moscow, 1973, p. 283 (in Russian).

effect that all member countries be considered to have restored normal diplomatic relations among themselves."[67] Aimed at improving relations among the League member states, this proposal could have made a significant contribution to the cause of peace and international cooperation. All these Soviet initiatives, together with the suggestion made to the American government in November 1933 that the USA, the USSR, Japan, China and several other states sign a Pacific Ocean Pact,[68] form a comprehensive peace programme based on the concept of "indivisible peace", its preservation and reinforcement. The doctrine of peaceful coexistence between the USSR and the capitalist countries, their cooperation in the cause of peace and collective security was herein put into practice. Collective security was to ensure equal rights and safeguards for all participants, as well as eliminate the threat posed by the aggressive powers.

On the basis of these proposals, the USSR and France initiated talks on a multilateral regional mutual aid treaty later known as the Eastern Pact. In order to expedite negotiations, the Soviet Union let France take the initiative in drawing up the terms of the agreement and presenting it to potential participants: Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland.

That a new atmosphere prevailed in the League of Nations was evident in France's foreign policy shift, Germany's and Japan's withdrawal and the positive response of a considerable number of member states to Soviet entry. The USSR therefore decided to join the League in hopes of making it a rallying point for all countries interested in preserving peace through a collective stand against aggression. Nevertheless, the Party leadership and the Soviet government were all aware that even without Germany and Japan, the League still included member states with no genuine interest in collective security. Under the headline "The USSR Fights for Peace", *Izvestia* published an eloquent article on just this issue, commenting that the Soviet government and people "fully understand that not every League member will make a sincere effort to defend peace. The Soviet Union is joining the League of Nations with the specific intention of supporting those powers who will fight to preserve and strengthen peace."[69]

On September 15, 1934 the USSR received an invitation signed by thirty states to enter the League of Nations. In its reply, the Soviet government declared that since peace reinforcement had always been the cornerstone of its foreign policy, since it had never ignored any appeal for international cooperation in this cause, it was prepared to take its rightful place in the League of Nations and assume the atten-

[67] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVI, pp. 876-77.
[68] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVII, p. 659.
[69] *Izvestia*, September 20, 1934.

dant international obligations. On the other hand, it would not bear any responsibility for League resolutions adopted prior to its entry.[70] On September 18, 1934 the USSR was accepted into the League of Nations and granted a permanent seat on the Council.

As a full-fledged League member, the USSR could redouble its anti-war efforts. Many European nations were not oblivious to the war threat, as is evident from a contemporary comment on "the enthusiasm with which these peoples, whose national independence is threatened by national socialism, welcome the ever more active and authoritative participation of the Soviet Union in European politics, because the activity of the USSR in the field of foreign policy bars the road to the offensive of the German fascists".[71]

Nazi propaganda, with its frenzied cry for revenge, greatly alarmed France, for whom the German war machine but a stone's throw away was a familiar and formidable foe. When the Italian fascist dictator Mussolini broadcast his intention to take complete control of the Mediterranean, or "Mare Nostre" ("Our Sea") as he put it, the French position became even more precarious.

Indeed, it was now trapped between two fascist powers. Germany posed the more ominous threat, provoking grave concern in Paris. The most effective defence against German aggression lay in alliance with the Soviet Union, which by 1933 wielded considerable military and economic might. Among the prominent French political figures who recognised the importance of rapprochement with the USSR were J. Paul-Boncour, E. Herriot, L.Barthou and P. Cot. By late 1933, during Paul-Boncour's term of office as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Franco-Soviet relations had reached a turning point and rapprochement was at hand. His successor, Barthou, declared the new orientation official policy in a speech before Parliament delivered in May 1934 and highly praised in the Soviet press.[72]

In the fall of 1933, when Germany mounted an undisguised arms drive and announced its territorial claims, it became an urgent imperative to consolidate France's international position. Accordingly, Paul-Boncour began to investigate the possibility of a Franco-Soviet defence alliance against Hitler's Germany. He discussed the matter on a number of occasions with B.S. Dovgalevsky, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris, stressing his government's wish to add a mutual assistance treaty to current Franco-Soviet accords on non-aggression and the "Declaration on the Definition of the Aggressor". On October 31, 1933, in a similar conversation with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Paul-Boncour asserted that France and the USSR

[70] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVII, pp. 588-89.

[71] *VII Congress of the Communist International*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1939, p. 405.

[72] *Pravda*, May 28, 1934.

should think of measures to counter nazi Germany's war preparations. He again spoke about a mutual assistance treaty. Since it was sincerely concerned with preserving peace and foiling Hitler's aggressive European schemes, the Soviet government welcomed Paul-Boncour's initiative, even though it regarded the security problem as an all-European affair. On December 28, 1933, Dovgalevsky presented the Soviet proposal for a regional treaty pledging mutual assistance in the event of attack. Paul-Boncour consented to these preliminary terms and offered to draw up the draft agreement.

At this point, influential anti-Soviet, pro-German forces intervened, calling the negotiations to an abrupt halt. Their wire-pulling dealt a serious blow to Franco-Soviet rapprochement and, consequently, French national interests in general.

In February 1934, a new government took office in France, designating Barthou Minister of Foreign Affairs. Appreciating both the German fascist threat and the Soviet role in keeping the peace, Barthou energetically promoted Franco-Soviet rapprochement. Nevertheless, talks on the Franco-Soviet mutual assistance treaty proposed by Paul-Boncour were not resumed until April 20, 1934, when Barthou announced that he had been authorised to do so.

The French then suggested that Germany be included in the negotiations, so that the latter should not accuse them of contracting some "German encirclement" pact. Barthou also wanted to extend the Locarno Accords of 1925 to incorporate the Soviet proposals. This became the so-called "East Locarno" draft or Eastern Pact discussed by France and the USSR in May and June 1934.

On June 27, 1934, the French government passed the draft on to London. While the British ruling circles dared not risk open opposition, it did all it could, step by step, to stonewall a final agreement. Using its favourite behind-the-scenes tactics, Whitehall let it be known that it was prepared to back the treaty, provided France and the USSR extended their mutual guarantees to Germany, which amounted to making the latter a full partner in the Franco-Soviet mutual assistance alliance. Furthermore, the London Foreign Office demanded that France endorse Germany's arms build-up. It insisted that Germany's consent to the proposed East Locarno Accords would inevitably depend on settling the munitions issue. With regard to Great Britain's stance on the Eastern Pact *per se*, the French Ambassador to London, Corbin, observed that it had raised a twofold objection to the French proposals from the outset. London's first counter-argument centered on treating the alliance talks and the armaments question as a single issue. It hinted it would support the treaty if France made certain concessions to Germany in the latter area.[73]

In order to win British consent for the Eastern Pact, the Soviet

[73] *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, No. 6, 1963, p. 158.

government informed London, on July 6, 1934, that it opposed neither Germany's inclusion in the Franco-Soviet security agreement nor its being extended the guarantees contracted by either signing party.[74]

That same day, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs instructed the Soviet Ambassador to notify its French counterpart that the USSR did not object to Germany's inclusion in the Eastern Pact.[75] Accordingly, the treaty was to include the following Central and East European countries: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, the Soviet Union, the Baltic states and Finland. They would pledge to guarantee the inviolability of each other's borders, to come to the assistance of any member country under attack and withhold aid to any aggressor state. A separate Franco-Soviet agreement was also scheduled for conclusion, whereby France would back the Eastern Pact and the USSR would join Great Britain and Italy in underwriting the Locarno Accords of 1925. Together the Eastern Pact and Franco-Soviet treaties, had they been signed, would have cancelled out the anti-Soviet bent of the Locarno Accords and set up a collective peace-keeping system in Europe. Provisions for Soviet entry into the League of Nations were also included.

British delay tactics involved a variety of stipulations designed to shelve the Eastern Pact and prevent France from signing a bilateral Franco-Soviet military alliance treaty.[76]

The Soviet government entertained no illusions on Hitler's agreeing to take part in the Eastern Pact, which would have cut down on his freedom to perpetrate acts of aggression.

Hitler's diplomatic policy of extreme caution imitated Whitehall's wait-and-manipulate strategy. Berlin received the Eastern Pact draft in July and postponed its reply till September 10. A German memorandum to the British government dated September 8, reads: "The German government did not expect to be called upon to participate in a Pact System involving extensive new obligations, while her equality is still being treated as an open question."[77] The same source indicates that Germany had no interest in French or Soviet guarantees and would protest a separate Franco-Soviet agreement. In other words, Germany disguised its refusal to participate in the Eastern Pact by citing its restricted arms rights.

Making liberal use of threats, blackmail and slander, the nazis mounted a fanfare campaign to promote bilateral treaties. To this end, Hitler approached France, Poland and all of Germany's neighbours

[74] Ibid.

[75] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVII, p. 479.

[76] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1918-1939*, Second Series, Vol. VI, 1933-1934, London, 1957, p. 806.

[77] *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series C, 1933-1937, Vol. III, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1959, pp. 397-98.

with the exception of Lithuania. Soviet foreign policy was now faced with the crucial task of unmasking the pseudo-peace-loving fascist governments and their sudden "zeal" for bilateral non-aggression pacts. "In point of fact," commented the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, "not all non-aggression pacts serve peaceable ends. The most notorious aggressive state can use this kind of treaty to guard its rear flank and gain a free hand for attacking a third party. We've seen cases where a certain country will adamantly refuse to sign a non-aggression pact with one neighbour and just as adamantly thrust it on another. It's the *divide et impere* principle."[78]

Litvinov went on to discuss the Berlin proposals and observed that the Soviet government would once have favoured such treaties and would probably again find them acceptable if the Soviet-sponsored mutual assistance alliance fell through. Since at present the bilateral pacts were being pushed to offset the Eastern Pact of mutual assistance, the USSR had to take a negative position.

The pro-fascist Polish government was one of the first to jump at the Trojan Horse proffered by Hitler's bilateral diplomacy. On January 26, 1934, Germany and Poland co-signed a Declaration of Non-Aggression, Hitler's first major foreign policy triumph and Germany's first step out of the diplomatic embargo imposed since the nazi takeover. This "peace" gesture cost Hitler nothing; the pact entailed no obligations as Germany had not formally recognised Poland's western border and could therefore claim Polish territory at will. At the same time, it seriously weakened French alliances in the East and France's international position in general. Moreover, the German-Polish agreement spawned a series of similar bilateral pacts with Germany's neighbours. In the calculations of Hitler's diplomatic corps, these pacts were to thwart the efforts of France, the USSR and all peace-loving forces fighting for a European collective security system, rightly seen as the greatest obstacle to their aggressive ambitions.

"Hitler needed the German-Polish pact," writes the author of *The Falsifiers of History*, "to scatter the proponents of collective security by proving that bilateral agreements would better serve Europe. This would permit the German aggressors to choose for themselves when and where to attack. Beyond all doubt, the pact put the first serious crack in the collective security edifice."[79]

The nazis took advantage of the Polish treaty to spread their web of intrigue. As its immediate consequences, Czechoslovakia's borders, and indeed its very sovereignty, fell into grave danger, the Austrian situation deteriorated, and German fascist aggression

[78] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVII, p. 430.

[79] *Falsifiers of History (An Historical Testimonial)*, Moscow, 1948, p. 14 (in Russian).

took on fresh vigour.[80]

Once the treaty had been signed, Poland redoubled its efforts to sabotage the Eastern Pact. On September 27, 1934, it dispatched a memorandum to Paris stating that Poland would join the Pact only if Germany were to sign as well, that it refused to assume any obligations with respect to Lithuania and Czechoslovakia, and finally, that it preferred bilateral treaties.

For its part, backed by its new ally in the Polish government, Hitler's camp stepped up its subversive activities, specifically its drive against the collective security plan for a multinational, anti-aggression front. It stopped at nothing, not even the assassination of prominent political figures.

When Barthou fell as its first victim, the proponents of the Eastern Pact and cooperation with the USSR lost a good deal of ground in the French government.

The Flandin administration took office, appointing P. Laval Minister of Foreign Affairs and signalling the rise of the pro-German lobby. Laval, a frank and staunch supporter of Franco-German alignment, thought France should use the Eastern Pact to pressure Hitler into agreement. "Laval makes no secret of his ultimate goal," Litvinov remarked to the French Ambassador in Moscow. "He wants to come to terms with Germany."[81] Laval, therefore, proved an extremely untrustworthy partner in the struggle, led by the Soviet Union, to establish collective security for Europe.

To put an end to Laval's dubious manoeuvres, to foil his scheme of using the collective security negotiations as a cover for Franco-German talks, Litvinov suggested that France and the Soviet Union co-sign a protocol whereby "each would pledge not to contract any political agreement with Germany without prior consultation with the other". Each would inform the other of all contacts with German envoys, of all political proposals "advanced by Germany through any channels whatsoever". Once a suitable text had been worked out, the agreement was signed on December 5, 1934[82] and joined shortly thereafter by Czechoslovakia.

In due course, Laval resumed his stonewalling tactics on the Eastern Pact negotiations. He was largely responsible for the French government stance on this issue. London's Foreign Office took advantage of his term of office to jettison the Pact and open bilateral discussions with Hitler's Germany.

During an Anglo-French conference held in London on February

[80] *VII Congress of the Communist International*, p. 403.

[81] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the French Ambassador in Moscow, December 13, 1934.

[82] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVII, pp. 725-26.

1-3, 1935, Whitehall urged the French to renounce the Eastern Pact for a treaty binding them to consultation only. Such were London's schemes to crush the Pact and the firm basis it projected for the collective defence of peace, the very reason why it was rejected by Hitler.

In their joint communiqué on the London conference, Great Britain and France made their consent to the Eastern Pact contingent on a "general settlement" with Germany to cover such "delicate issues" as the latter's right to arms.[83] In effect, they had scrapped the mutual assistance treaty.

Alarmed by this turn of events, on February 17, the Soviet government instructed its plenipotentiary in London to inform Whitehall that "the Soviet public was inclined to hold Great Britain responsible for Germany's stubborn resistance to a collective security system in Eastern Europe".[84] Three days later, the British and French authorities received an official statement reaffirming the Soviet government's irreversible position on the Eastern Pact and underlining its urgent significance. The declaration pointed out that "the only antidote to the real and imminent danger of armed international conflict is a network of regional pacts for mutual assistance among those states whose efforts to avert this threat are sincere".[85] The alternative collective security schemes sponsored by various parties were, to quote the same text, consciously or unconsciously designed to frustrate final-phase negotiations on the regional pacts. They offered no new solutions, apart from a long and fruitless international debate which could serve only states opposed to genuine European security.

In addition to exposing such wire-pulling tactics, the Soviet government strove to bring the Eastern Pact talks to a rapid conclusion. This agreement would, in its judgement, provide a firm foundaton for a miltinational front against aggression. Thus, it pointedly reminded Eden, during the latter's 1935 Moscow visit, that the USSR had no intention of abandoning the mutual assistance treaty and protested Hitler's current project for a non-aggression pact.

"When the German government makes a mockery of international obligations, what guarantee do we have, " Stalin asked Eden, "that it will abide by the terms of a non-aggression pact? None whatsoever. Which is why a treaty with Germany is not enough. In order to secure peace we need a more realistic guarantee such as only the Eastern Mutual Assistance Pact can afford."[86] And Stalin reiterated the Soviet government's wish to include Germany in the Eastern Pact, to

[83] *Survey of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, London, 1935, pp. 122-23.

[84] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVIII, p. 112.

[85] Ibid., p. 118.

[86] Ibid., p. 248.

maintain friendly relations between the two countries. Eden was also briefed on the Soviet view of German arms build-up, the real motive behind Hitler's British-backed demand for "equal munitions rights". The USSR was utterly convinced of nazi Germany's aggressive intentions, and hence believed that the present situation called for "steps to block [its] arms build-up."[87]

Time and again, the USSR warned the Western powers that their tolerant attitude to German armaments drive could turn against them. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs brought just this point home to Eden in their conversation of March 28, 1935: "In making Eastern expansion the current focus of attention, Hitler hopes to trap the Western states into sanctioning his munitions drive. When the stockpiles are as high as he wants, his cannon can open fire in quite a different direction."[88]

But the British government, blinded by anti-Soviet hostility, took no heed of these solemn warnings. It would not reconsider its negative stance on the European collective security project. What is more, it kept to its line of helping Hitler frustrate the Eastern Pact in hopes of promoting an Anglo-German understanding and thus bears a good deal of the responsibility for the project's collapse. Wise after the fact, or rather after the lessons of World War II, Eden admits as much in his *Memoirs*: "Had the Eastern Pact come into being, it would also have influenced German policy towards Czechoslovakia, not in its intention but in its execution. It might even have averted Munich."[89]

Contrary to even its own national interests, the London Cabinet did its utmost to checkmate the mutual assistance project. With the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935, it took its first steps towards alignment with Germany.

Soviet Mutual Assistance Treaties with France and Czechoslovakia

German and Polish rejection, plus British obstructionist scheming, had doomed the Eastern Pact to failure; the Soviet government now had to explore new avenues for the collective defence of peace and so approached Paris to reopen negotiations on the original 1933 project which had slated a Franco-Soviet mutual assistance treaty as the first link in the collective security chain. The USSR was firmly convinced that "only mutual assistance treaties could ensure peace" since they were open to all states committed to preventing war and no single country "could feel surrounded or threatened in any way, so

[87] Ibid., p. 242.
[88] Ibid., p. 235.
[89] *The Eden Memoirs. Facing the Dictators*, London, 1962, p. 171.

long as it shared the peace-keeping goals of its co-signatories."[90]

By 1935, Germany had introduced universal conscription and started to build its Luftwaffe. Confronted with a steadily mounting nazi threat, the French government was forced to put aside its hesitation and sign, on May 2, mutual assistance treaty with the Soviet Union.[91] As required by the signing protocol, both countries reaffirmed their preference for a regional collective security pact. Should either party find itself in imminent danger of attack from any European state, the 1935 treaty bound both participants to immediate consultation in accordance with Article 10 of the League of Nations Covenant covering mutual territorial integrity guarantees for League members.

In the event of an actual unprovoked attack by any European state, Article II of the treaty provided for immediate mutual assistance and support conformable to the military measures described in Article 16 of the Covenant.

Article IV stated that the treaty should not be taken to infringe on either League obligations or the obligations enjoined on either party as members of said organisation, while Article V set the term of duration at 5 years.[92]

Finally, the signing protocol bound both France and the Soviet Union to observe the treaty with or without its ratification by the League Council. Assistance obligations were declared applicable only to attacks on the sovereign territory of either signing party.

The Franco-Soviet Pact was a landmark event in international affairs of the mid-1930s and a major victory for the cause of peace in Europe. It strengthened France's strategical position vis-à-vis the Third Reich by forcing the latter to weigh the consequences of a two-front war before deciding to attack either treaty partner.

There were, however, two incontrovertible drawbacks: the treaty did not stipulate automatic enaction of its mutual assistance obligations, nor was it supplemented by a convention of war specifying the form, scope or conditions under which military aid was to be rendered. Both shortcomings were the self-confessed handiwork of Laval, who declared he had done his best to keep the French commitments to a minimum and still hoped to come to terms with Hitler.

The Franco-Soviet Pact could have played a major role in establishing a European collective security system had France, like the Soviet Union, taken it as the starting point for a European security policy.

The fact that it was followed by the signing on May 16, 1935 of a similar treaty between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, seemed to have confirmed its peace-keeping significance for Europe. In fact,

[90] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVII, p. 430.

[91] Ibid., Vol. XVIII, pp. 309-12.

[92] Ibid., p. 310.

the only difference between the two agreements lay in Point II of the latter's signing protocol, which read: "Both governments understand that the mutual aid obligations set forth in the present treaty are binding if, and only if, all other conditions being met, France comes to the aid of the party under attack."[93] This highly significant proviso was attached at the request of Eduard Benes. The Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified its ambassadors that Benes had "had the text rephrased to make the treaty commitments applicable to us [i.e. Czechoslovakia—*Ed.*] only if applicable to France as well. This was intended to forestall automatic enactment of the treaty."[94] In other words, Benes and his bourgeois backers had deliberately hamstrung Soviet-Czechoslovak assistance by making the action of either party contingent on prior French aid. Despite the glaring inconsistencies demonstrated by the Czechoslovak statesmen throughout the negotiations, the Soviet government hailed the pact as the dawn of a new era in the two countris' relations.

The Soviet Union's treaties with France and Czechoslovakia consummated the peace-making initiatives outlined in the Politburo resolution of December 13, 1933. Both mutual assistance pacts strengthened the position of peaceable states determined to resist the aggressor.

They followed the Soviet Union's basic line on peace as set down by Lenin, and were "serious acts of positive policy [aimed] at uniting all possible forces for an active defence of peace".[95]

They enhanced the "strategical position of the signing parties and forced fascist Germany to face the possibility of a two-front war should it take any militant action against any country so covered".[96] Finally, and no less significantly, they boosted the confidence of the smaller and middle-sized states in regional mutual assistance pacts as a means of preserving European peace and security.

In the 1930s, the European continent represented the most important Soviet foreign policy arena. It was, after all, the political hub of the world and the central hotbed of war. But the USSR was equally concerned with keeping the peace in Asia. Here, encouraged by the total acquiescence of the leading Western powers, Japanese aggression was assuming alarming proportions. In order to put an end to these aggressive designs, the Soviet Union proposed a Pacific Pact to be signed by the USA, the USSR, Japan and China. The terms envisaged included non-aggression and withholding assistance to the aggressor. On November 16, 1933, Litvinov made the first such proposal to

[93] Ibid., p. 336.

[94] *Czechoslovakia's Foreign Policy, 1918-1939*, Collected Articles, Moscow, 1959, p. 366 (in Russian).

[95] *VII Congress of the Communist International*, p. 425.

[96] *A History of World War II 1939-1945*, in 12 volumes, Vol. 1, p. 304.

President Roosevelt and reported that it was favourably received. Special Assistant to the Secretary of State Bullitt was immediately put in charge of preparations and instructed to make progress reports to the President.[97] The Soviet Union requested that American government act as front sponsor so as to expedite negotiations. In return, the USA suggested that Great Britain, France and the Netherlands be included over and above the Soviet nominees. At this point, under pressure from anti-Soviet lobbyists the American government disrupted the discussions refusing to present the proposal to potential participants. Whitehall, with its policy of catering to Japanese militarism, was quick to take advantage of American shilly-shallying and adopted an equally evasive stance on the Soviet-proposed Pacific Regional Security Pact. Meanwhile, the United States opted for a naval arms race against Japan, its chief rival in the Pacific. A three-to-one sea vessel superiority was targeted and it was hoped that the competition would break Japan financially and force it to come to terms.

For over four years, from November 1933 to mid-1937, the USSR urged the Western powers to sign the Pacific Pact. It also approached the Chinese government: as Litvinov informed the Chinese Ambassador in Moscow on March 11, 1937, a Pacific treaty was the only way to halt the Japanese advance on China and secure peace for the Far East. Since the USSR had long supported the pact, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs continued, British and American consent were the main targets.[98]

The Kuomintang government in Nanking, however, was more interested in striking a bargain with the Japanese militarists and so sidestepped the issue of collective containment. By mid-1937, lack of American support had brought the Pacific talks to a complete standstill. In late June of the same year, Roosevelt told the Soviet Ambassador A.A. Troyanovsky that treaties did not inspire confidence, that only strong naval forces could guarantee peace.[99] Thus, despite Soviet efforts, no collective defence of peace could be organised in the Far East.

Soviet Attempts to Organise Collective Resistance to Fascist Aggression via the League of Nations and International Conferences

It soon became obvious that appeasement policies had been a fatal mistake. Among the aggressive powers, Hitler's government took an

[97] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVIII, p. 659.

[98] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the Chinese Ambassador in Moscow, March 11, 1937.

[99] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Soviet Ambassador to the USA and F. Roosevelt, June 29, 1937.

especially provocative course. In March 1935, it defied the Treaty of Versailles by introducing universal conscription, an act discussed in April at an Extraordinary Session of the League of Nations and strongly condemned by the Soviet delegate.

Though the USSR had never concealed its opposition to the Versailles accords in general and German disarmament in particular, said the Soviet delegate, it considered unilateral abrogation of the treaty dangerous, because, like all League members, it was confronted by an infraction of an international instrument. The Soviet Union upheld the principle of universal observance since "keeping faith with international commitments directly linked to security is one of the cornerstones of world peace".[100] Hitler's Germany, he went on to declare, was touting "equal arms rights" as a smokescreen for breakneck war preparations for global repartition. While the Soviet Union acknowledged such rights for all nations, it believed the League "should assume that arms were to be used exclusively to defend existing borders and national security". The German fascists, however, were stockpiling weapons to back their aggressive schemes for "unlimited foreign conquest and the wholesale destruction of sovereign states".[101] The League should unite worldwide forces against aggression and work towards "the international situation which would set maximum obstacles to the infringement of peace".[102]

On the same principle of collective security and resistance to aggression, the USSR rose to Ethiopia's defence when the latter was attacked by fascist Italy on October 2, 1935. It called on the League of Nations to enforce economic sanctions against the aggressor. As the Soviet Ambassador in London stressed in his conversation of November 6, with S. Hoare, Foreign Secretary, such measures had an enormous impact on curtailing acts of aggression. "Italy is an aggressive state," he said, "but there is little threat to Europe in such a relatively weak aggressor. There are far stronger, far more dangerous potential aggressors on this continent. We believe it is essential to levy immediate sanctions against Italy as a lesson and a warning to all would-be aggressors."[103]

On November 22, 1935, the Soviet government sent a note to Rome expressing its unqualified condemnation of the Ethiopian venture. To deny that Ethiopia was a sovereign state like any other was tantamount to "rejecting the very foundations of the League of Nations, negating all collective security efforts and spurring on further aggression. It meant questioning international solidarity in the cause

[100] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVIII, p. 290.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid., p. 291.

[103] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain and S. Hoare, November 10, 1935.

of peace, the keystone of Soviet foreign policy and the whole motive behind the USSR's entry into the League of Nations."[104]

Not one of the leading capitalist powers followed the Soviet example. What is more, Great Britain and France moved to block economic sanctions against Italy, hoping to attain mutual understanding and eventual rapprochement with Mussolini.

Granting impunity to the Italian aggressor in Ethiopia had far-reaching consequences in the encouragement it offered militarist states. Taking their cue from Great Britain and France, some countries refused to lay embargoes on arms sales to Italy, while others rejected financial boycotts or export bans. The Italian fascists capitalised on these erratic measures to crush the ill-equipped Ethiopian army—one of the first to bear the full brunt of the American Neutrality Act which prohibited the sale of arms to all warring states, with no distinction made between aggressive and defensive sides. Italy, with an adequate arms potential of its own, was hardly affected by the Act. Quite the reverse was true of the party under attack, whose weaker economy could not produce sufficient arms. Cutting off external supplies doomed such a country to certain defeat. On the other hand, the Neutrality Act did not cover the sale of strategic raw materials, a loophole Italy found most convenient since it continued to import such goods from the USA. In effect, the Act played right into the fascists' hands. When the League of Nations failed to carry through its sanctions resolution, it lost considerable authority and credibility. International tension mounted as aggression ran scot free.

In view of the special vulnerability of the Eastern Mediterranean countries, Turkey recommended that an international conference be called to review regulations on the Straits of the Bosporus and the Dardanelles. The motion carried with Soviet support and on June 22, 1936, delegates from the USSR, Great Britain, France, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia, Australia and Japan met in the Swiss town of Montreux. The conference was dominated by an Anglo-Soviet dispute. Great Britain adamantly opposed amendments to the Lausanne Treaty which had opened the Black Sea to large numbers of warships from states beyond its shores, whereas the Soviet Union demanded maximum restrictions on just such vessels in the interests of the coastal countries.On July 20, 1936, a new, 20-year convention was signed.[105]

Under the new regulations, warships from non-coastal states were granted limited peacetime access to the Black Sea. Light surface vessels were permitted to an aggregate ceiling of 30,000 tonnes and a

[104] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XVIII, p. 561.

[105] *A Collection of Treaties, Agreements and Conventions Concluded Between the USSR and Other States, and Currently in Effect*, Issue IX, People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, Moscow, 1938, pp. 61-78 (in Russian).

maximum 21 days' sailing for any single craft. In times of war, these entry rights were to be cancelled entirely for the countries engaged in hostilities. For the Black Sea states, including the Soviet Union, this represented an improvement on the Lausanne Treaty, but still fell short of their security requirements. Summing up the conference results, the Soviet delegate observed that it had "acknowledged—though inadequately as yet—the coastal states' special rights to the Black Sea and its Straits. It had conceded that the area's peculiar geographic position to a large extent exempted it from the usual provisions for absolute freedom of the seas."[106]

Italy's seizure of Ethiopia stimulated all opponents of peace and collective security to new efforts. Under the pretext of "reinforcing the League of Nations", they strove to delete article 16 from the Covenant which bound member states to joint military and economic sanctions against aggressors.

In March 1936, the Soviet Union made yet another attempt to unite all League members for the collective defence of peace. Germany had just sent troops into the demilitarised Rhine zone in defiance of the Locarno Treaty. During the Council debate on the violation, the Soviet delegate warned the League that if it took no steps to reinforce East European security, its authority would be badly shaken. With Great Britain in the lead, however, most member states rejected the Soviet-proposed collective measures to prevent violation of international treaties.[107]

The USSR rebuffed all attacks on the League Covenant. It advocated wider use of the articles covering a variety of sanctions, including military measures, applicable to aggressor states. In August 1936, it requested the Council to consider its proposed amendments to the application of Covenant provisions. It particularly recommended simplified procedures for establishing the fact of aggression and imposing the relevant military sanctions. In the latter instance, special provisions were suggested for mutual assistance treaties members.[108] Regional or, if necessary, bilateral mutual assistance pacts were key points in the Soviet proposals. The projected scope would entail the widest possible range of geographic features, scale and distribution up to and including entire continents. The Soviet Union urged the Council to recognise regional mutual assistance treaties as a supplementary security guarantee for the League of Nations. In an earlier motion, it had proposed "a network of regional pacts to cover every continent, starting with, at the very least, all of Europe" and that these pacts should not substitute but supplement the League Covenant.[109]

106 *Pravda*, July 22, 1936.
107 *Izvestia*, April 18, 1935.
108 *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XIX, p. 400.
109 Ibid., p. 335.

In late September 1936, at a Plenary Session of the League of Nations, the USSR enjoined all member states to use the League Covenant to organise the collective defence of peace. The Soviet delegate compared the organisation to a bloc of peaceable states: "We make but one demand—that this bloc close ranks for genuine mutual assistance and, above all, set up an advance plan of action. It must not be taken unawares, its efforts to organise collective resistance to aggression must match the war preparations of the other states."[110]

The USSR appealed to the League to make no concessions to the aggressors. Before the assembled nations of the world, it decried the seizure of the territory of other states, flagrant disregard for international obligations and global repartition by force.[111]

Guided by the principles of the indivisible peace, its collective defence and resistance to any form of aggression, the Soviet Union took part in the Nyon conference held in early September 1937. Called to discuss protection of navigation in the Mediterranean, the conference drafted counter-measures against naval aggression by the fascist powers. The Soviet delegate announced that he represented his government not only in the capacity of a Mediterranean power, but as a "major power aware of its rights and obligations, concerned with world order and peace and determined to combat all manner of aggression and arbitrary rule.

"As a steadfast champion of collective security, the USSR could not ignore an appeal for its application to peacetime navigation, especially on such an important waterway as the Mediterranean."[112]

The Soviet Union took an active part in working out an entire package of measures to guarantee safe navigation. The conference reached a workable agreement designed to put an end to piracy on the part of the fascist powers. The Soviet delegate had high praise for the conventions adopted, describing them as "a step towards the collective security programme and the regional pact system".[113]

The USSR and German-Italian Intervention in Spain

The February 1936 victory of the Spanish Popular Front and its first progressive reforms greatly alarmed the fascist governments of Germany and Italy.

Still more ill-will and hatred were provoked by the French Popular

[110] Ibid., p. 441.

[111] *Soviet Foreign Policy. Collected Documents*, Vol. IV (1935-July 1941), Moscow, 1946, pp. 183-84 (in Russian).

[112] Ibid., p. 296.

[113] Ibid., p. 299.

Front victories in the parliamentary elections of April 26, and May 3, 1936. Brought to power with active Communist support, left-wing forces formed a government committed to the Popular Front programme and headed by Léon Blume, a right-of-centre leader in the Socialist Party.

The working people of France could now defend their democratic freedoms and execute important social reforms through a left bloc. Significantly, the Popular Front victory in France blocked the fascists' access to power. Nonetheless, the mounting struggle over domestic and foreign policy issues toppled the Front. Determined to recapture the political ground gained by the working class, the 200 wealthiest French families led the reactionaries into a bold counter-attack. Aided and abetted by the nazi propaganda machine, they launched a subversive slander campaign in the press, raising a hue and cry over the alleged "Communist threat".

Reactionary forces in Spain were not reconciled to their loss of power either. Egged on by Berlin and Rome, they plotted to overthrow the lawfully-elected republican government of the Popular Front. Germany and Italy lent active support to the military coup instigated by General Franco and his officers' clique. As the major imperialist powers kept to their policy of indulgence, Hitler and Mussolini were free to organise direct intervention to establish a fascist regime under Franco. Crushing the Spanish revolution was only a short-term goal, though. Eventually, Hitler and Mussolini hoped to cut France and Great Britain off from their colonies and set up a rear-flank threat to France.

The USSR and progressive public opinion throughout the world exposed this international reactionary conspiracy and called for an all-out counter-offensive. A powerful grass roots movement to defend Republican Spain swept through Europe and America.

It was in France's national interests, specifically as far as its military security and Popular Front programme were concerned, to offer immediate assistance to the Spanish Republican government. But the Blume administration turned a blind eye to this obvious truth and fell in with the reactionary forces to invent the most elaborate excuses against such a move. Furthermore, Blume thought he could use the Spanish situation to work out a deal with fascist Germany. With this end in view, his government resolved, on July 25, 1936, to adopt a neutral stance on Spain. It banned arms exports across the Pyrennees, which amounted to cutting off all arms supplies to the legal Republican government. In the meantime, the fascist rebels received generous arms shipments from Germany and Italy.

Similarly, the British government sought a suitable pretext to ignore the popular demand to help the Republic fight Franco's fascists and the German-Italian interventionists at their side. Paris and London decided their aim could be achieved by signing a non-interference pact

which, while ostensibly limiting all foreign intervention in Spain, would permit them to cut off assistance to the Republicans. In the meantime, Hitler and Mussolini would continue to intervene in Spanish affairs, setting up a smokescreen of false assurances to cut off all aid or referring to "Soviet aid" to justify their own. By August 2, 1936, Blume had reached a preliminary agreement with Whitehall and declared that Germany and Italy would also sign the proposed treaty. Under these terms, which seemed to promise an end to German-Italian interference in Spanish affairs, the Soviet Union announced its readiness to take part.

A Non-Intervention Committee, chaired by Lord Plymouth, was set up in London. The USSR government appointed I.M. Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in Great Britain, as its representative. In its first two months of operations, the Committee did nothing to halt German-Italian intervention or arms shipments to Franco's insurgents. Nonetheless, the mere fact of its existence gave France and Great Britain the perfect excuse to deprive the legal Spanish government of munitions. On October 4, V.P. Potemkin, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, wrote to Maisky outlining the real objectives of the Committee: "Both the French and the British do not want and have never wanted to render any genuine assistance whatsoever to Madrid. They instigated the Non-Intervention Agreement as a stop to public opinion, as a legal façade for their withholding assistance."[114]

Thanks to British and French indulgence, Germany and Italy continued, and even intensified, their interventionist activities in Spain, to say nothing of their direct aid to Franco's insurrectionists. On October 7, 1936, Maisky presented the Committee with a detailed list of evidence concerning the latter infraction. In the same document, the Soviet government gave notice that "if these violations of the non-interference agreement are not terminated immediately, the USSR will consider itself free of all obligations contracted thereunder."[115] On October 23, on instructions from the Soviet government, Maisky informed the Committee that continuing German and Italian intervention in Spain had made the non-interference agreement "a blank and torn scrap of paper, with no further validity". In this light, the Soviet government considered it necessary to "reinstate the Spanish government's right and channels for the purchase of arms abroad -rights and channels currently enjoyed by all other governments, and to grant treaty members the right to sell or withhold the sale of arms to Spain at their discretion".[116]

[114] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador in London, October 4, 1936.

[115] *Soviet Foreign Policy. Collected Documents*, Vol. IV, p. 196.

[116] Ibid., p. 200.

Two days later, Maisky received a letter from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. "There are no guarantees that the insurrectionist generals will not continue to acquire military supplies," Litvinov wrote. "The Soviet government therefore assumes that until such guarantees are enforced and observance of non-interference commitments is effectively controlled, governments who hold that equipping the legal Spanish government conforms to international standards of law, order and justice have every right to consider themselves no more bound to the agreement than those who outfit the insurrectionists in defiance thereof."[117]

On April 30, 1937, at a London meeting called by the British Committee in Support of Republican Spain, the Belgian senator Rolin described British and French policy as sacrificing national interests for outright complicity with the German and Italian interventionists. This was beyond his comprehension, Rolin continued, and a striking contrast to the Soviet line of active support for the Spanish people in their struggle against the fascist insurgents. As an impartial observer, he had to point out that of all the European powers only one, the Soviet Union, had taken a genuine stand against Germany and Italy.[118]

There was no substantial difference between American policy on Republican Spain and its British or French models. In extending the Neutrality Act to countries torn by civil war, the USA had dealt a heavy blow to the Republicans. The US State Department had deprived the Republican government of the right to purchase American arms and furthermore had cancelled all sales contracts pre-dating the Act. Franco's insurgents, of course, were fully equipped by Germany and Italy.

On October 16, 1936, General Secretary of the CPSU (B) Central Committee Stalin sent a telegram to José Díaz, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Spain, outlining the Soviet Party and government position: "The working people of the USSR are only performing their duty in rendering all possible assistance to the revolutionary masses of Spain. They realise that liberating Spain from fascist reactionary oppression is not a private Spanish affair, but a cause for all progressive mankind."[119]

Acting in full accordance with legal standards recognised the world over, as befits true internationalists, the Soviet Communist Party and government supported the Spanish freedom fighters in every way. That the USSR would keep up its comprehensive and disinterested assistance was confirmed in its official message sent to L. Caballero, head of the Spanish Republican government on December 21, 1936:

[117] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the Soviet Ambassador in London, October 25, 1936.

[118] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Excerpt from the Diary of the Soviet Ambassador in London.

[119] *Pravda*, October 16, 1936.

"We have always considered it our duty to help the Spanish working people and all democratically-minded citizens in their struggle against the fascist military clique, an agent of international fascism."[120]

For as long as the Republican government stood in Spain, to the bitter end, the Soviet Union resolutely kept its word.[121] The facts speak for themselves: between October 1936 and January 1939 it delivered 648 aeroplanes, 347 tanks, 60 armoured cars, 1,186 heavy guns, 20,648 machine-guns, 497,813 rifles and large shipments of missiles, cartridges and gunpowder.[122]

In the autumn of 1938, it extended 85 million dollars credit. Upon request, it sent military experts and advisers who were of enormous assistance in creating the Regular Republican People's Army, in planning and supervising key operations against the fascist rebels and interventionists. More than 42,000 volunteers from 54 countries, including some 3,00 soldiers among them, 160 pilots from the Soviet Union,[123] joined international brigades to help the Spanish freedom-fighters. Many Soviet volunteers distinguished themselves in battle; close to 200 laid down their lives.

In 1967, Brezhnev recalled: "The glorious epic of our brotherhood-in-arms with revolutionary Spain is unforgettable. Our country went to the aid of the Spanish people with everything it could—from diplomatic support and economic help to the personal contribution of thousands of Soviet volunteers, who to the last day, together with the Spaniards, fought at Barcelona barricades and in the Madrid sky."[124]

But the odds were against them. The German and Italian interventionist army alone counted some 300,000 soldiers and officers. And the fascist aggressors found assistance in the Franco-British "non-interference" policy which in effect dealt the death blow to the Spanish Republic. Of the British stance, the Soviet Ambassador in London wrote on October 26, 1937: "They have no intention of forcing full-scale evacuation of the German and Italian troops, for this would give certain victory to the Spanish government, an outcome they have absolutely no wish to see.... Hence the notorious 'substantial evacuation' formula which, even if enforced, would leave Franco just as many Italians and Germans as the British believe he needs to prevent a Republican victory."[125]

[120] *War and Revolution in Spain. 1936-1939*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1968, p. 419 (in Russian).

[121] *A History of World War II 1939-1945*, in 12 volumes, Vol. 2, *On the Eve of the War*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 54-55.

[122] Ibid., p. 54.

[123] Ibid., p. 55.

[124] L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Moscow, 1972, p. 52.

[125] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador to Great Britain to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, October 26, 1937.

In their fight for freedom and the Republic, the Spanish people, its Army and their volunteer supporters from all over the world, displayed unprecedented heroism. Despite tremendous losses, they continued to fight. Over 1 million people died in combat, under German and Italian bombardment or as victims of Franco's repression.[126]

London and Paris shut their eyes to the German and Italian interventionists' atrocities. In an attempt to sweep the Spanish question under the carpet, they dropped the "non-interference" farce. Thus, in January 1939, at the 104th Session of the League of Nations, the British and French delegates spoke out against applying the collective economic sanctions listed under Article 16 of the League Covenant to the German and Italian aggressors in Spain. This was tantamount to handing the fascists *carte blanche* in crushing the Spanish Republic. That day, a shout rang out from the gallery: "You have destroyed Spain! "[127]

Betraying the Spanish Republic was a crucial phase in the policy of "appeasing" the aggressive fascist powers masterminded by Great Britain, whose influence on other governments, including the French, climbed steadily.

When the Chamberlain administration took office in Whitehall, mutual understanding with the fascist powers became the focal point of British policy. The wide-ranging agreement sought by Chamberlain was intended not only to isolate the USSR but to make it the target of German fascist aggression. As Lloyd-George remarked, on November 21, 1937, the British Prime Minister was prepared to sacrifice Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia and a host of other countries to his overriding goal- a treaty with Germany and Italy.[128]

The Soviet Struggle Against Japanese Aggression in the Far East

The policy of "appeasing" the German and Italian aggressors encouraged the Japanese militarists as well. Confronted with a steadily rising incidence of Japanese-inspired skirmishes on its Far East Mongolian border, the USSR did its best to localise the tension and avert full-fledged war. In an effort to normalise Soviet-Japanese relations, it proposed a non-aggression pact. The offer was repeated on January 4, 1933. Still, Japan continued to fuel tension in the Far East, sending a

[126] *A History of World War II 1939-1945*, in 12 volumes, Vol. 2, p. 63.

[127] *A History of Diplomacy*, Vol. III, Second Ed., Moscow, 1965, p. 720 (in Russian).

[128] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Soviet Ambassador in London and Lloyd George, November 21, 1937.

curt refusal to Moscow in 1935. Over 80 border incidents were registered for that same year alone, while in 1936, Soviet frontier officials detained 137 Japanese agents.[129] In 1935, the USSR government reported to the 7th Congress of Soviets that it had long known of a Japanese plan to attack the Mongolian People's Republic. For this reason, and in accordance with the MPR's wish to add mutual assistance obligations to the strong bonds of friendship between their two countries, the Soviet and Mongolian governments had concluded a verbal gentlemen's mutual assistance agreement as early as November 27, 1934.[130] Japan, however, had failed to draw the appropriate conclusions. The heavy clashes it provoked on the Mongolian-Manchurian border in February 1936 bore all the earmarks of a genuine war threat to the MPR. At this point, the Soviet Union sent a stern warning to Japan. When interviewed by Roy Howard, Chairman of the Scripps-Howard Newspapers chain on March 1, 1936, Stalin declared: "Should Japan decide to attack the Mongolian People's Republic, to encroach upon its sovereign status, we shall have to come to our neighbours' aid.... We shall help the MPR just as we did in 1921."[131]

The close alliance between the two countries was made official in a protocol signed, published and effective as of March 12, 1936, whereby both committed themselves to "all necessary assistance, including military aid" in the event of a third-party attack on either's territory.[132]

Though the Japanese military clique adhered to its incendiary line on the USSR and the MPR well into 1937, it dared not risk outright war. On July 7, 1937, Japan attacked China, seizing the latter's key trade and industry centres (Shanghai, Peking, Tientsin, Kalgan, etc.) with lightning speed. The fires of war, set by Japan, swept throughout Asia.

China suffered immensely from Japanese aggression. Only the Soviet Union lent it diplomatic support and other assistance. On August 21, 1937, the two countries signed a non-aggression pact whereby each pledged "to abstain from attacking the other, be it a separate or joint venture launched with one or several other powers". Article 2 of the Sino-Soviet treaty precluded assistance, direct or indirect, to any country or countries engaged in attacking either co-signatory. Through this pact, the Soviet Union demonstrated its friendly attitude to the Chinese people and its readiness to do everything in its power to ease the latter's burden in their struggle for independence. *Pravda* stressed the great significance of this step when

[129] *A History of World War II 1939-1945*, in 12 volumes, Vol. I, pp. 103-04.
[130] *A Diplomacy Dictionary*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1973, p. 317 (in Russian).
[131] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XIX, p. 106.
[132] Ibid., pp. 136-37.

it wrote: "The Sino-Soviet treaty has put the principle of indivisible peace into practice. It has reaffirmed the need to defend peace in the East and the West alike."[133] With its rear-flank guarded by the treaty, China could concentrate all its forces on repelling the Japanese aggressor. In addition, it received all kinds of assistance, including military and technical aid. Negotiations on Soviet credit extensions culminated in a 50-million-dollar loan signed on March 1, 1938.

To counterbalance the Western powers' indulgence of Japanese war-mongering, the Soviet Union persevered in its struggle to contain aggression, preserve peace and organise collective resistance to militarism. Thus it tried once again to rouse the League of Nations into concrete action for the defence of European and Asian security. At the September 1937 Plenary Session it sponsored a series of measures to halt Japanese aggression in China. "On the Asian Continent, without declaring war, without cause or justification, one state has attacked another," said the Soviet delegate in his speech of September 21, "China has been invaded by 100,000-strong armies, its shores are blockaded, a major world trade centre has been paralysed. And this, it would seem, is only the beginning—how and when it will end is as yet beyond our reckoning. In Europe, for close to two years now, foreign troops have been ravaging another country, Spain."[134]

At last, at the insistence of the Soviet Union, the League passed a motion condemning Japan's savage bombing raids on Chinese towns. The debate was then dropped, as London, backed by Paris, pressured the Plenary Assembly into submitting the matter to a special international conference scheduled to open in Brussels on November 3, 1937.[135] In Brussels, joint scheming on the part of the American and British delegates forced a negative vote on the Soviet proposal to levy the collective sanctions up to and including military measures set forth in Article 16 of the League Covenant against Japan. The conference also rejected China's proposal, seconded by the USSR, to impose economic sanctions on Japan.

At the same time, the Western powers persistently maintained that the Soviet Union, as China's neighbour, could take independent steps against the Japanese aggressor and put an end to its intervention in China. This was a thinly-disguised attempt to incite open warfare between Japan and the USSR.

A large share of the blame for the Brussels deadlock lies with the USA. An article appearing in *The New York Times* On November 30, 1937 admitted as much: "The United States has lost its leadership in world affairs and to that fact largely can be attributed the impotence

133 *Pravda*, August 30, 1937.

134 *Soviet Foreign Policy. Collected Documents*, Vol. IV, p. 304.

135 See: V. Y. Sipols, *The Soviet Struggle for Peace and Security. 1933-1939*, pp. 155-63.

of the Nine-Power Treaty Conference in Brussels. The reason for their loss of influence is plain: treaty-breaking Governments and dictators have become convinced that for no cause short of actual invasion will the United States initiate or join in any effective movement to assure world peace....

"The world was put on notice that the United States was out to save its own skin from immediate dangers, and the dictators were informed that the American group controlling policy was prepared to see the world remade on fascist lines without interference and apparently without understanding that this would mean anything dangerous to us at all."[136]

China's only ally was the Soviet Union. Twice in 1938 the USSR extended China 50-million-dollar credits, and in June 1939, a 150-million-dollar loan was signed. Under these terms, between 1938 and 1939, the USSR shipped some 600 aeroplanes, 100 cannon and howitzers, over 8,000 machine-guns, not to mention transport equipment and military supplies such as shells and cartridges. By mid-February 1939, 3,665 Soviet military experts were working in China. Over 200 Soviet volunteers fell in the struggle to liberate the Chinese people.[137]

On January 21, 1938, Sun Fo, Chairman of the Executive Yoan (Council of Ministers), told Stomonyakov, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs: "In their war against the interventionists, in their war of liberation, the Chinese people draw strength from Soviet sympathy and support."[138]

Even Chiang Kai-shek was obliged to acknowledge in his letter to K.Y. Voroshilov: "Our country has been at war with Japan for over two years now. Thanks to the profound sympathy and compassion of the Soviet people, China was given material aid which enabled it to carry on this long war of liberation."[139]

Political support and various kinds of aid were also rendered to other peoples fighting against aggressors for freedom and independence.

* * *

Defying world reaction, the Soviet Union managed over the course of five years (1933-1937) to maintain peaceful conditions for the Soviet people preoccupied with building socialism and fulfilling the

[136] *The New York Times*, November 30, 1937.

[137] *A History of World War II 1939-1945*, in 12 volumes, Vol. II, pp. 73-74.

[138] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the Chinese Representative Sun Fo, January 21, 1938.

[139] *V. I. Lenin and Soviet Foreign Policy*, Moscow, 1969, p. 164 (in Russian).

collective security and against fascism and the threat of another war.

Upon joining the League of Nations, the Soviet Union worked hard to make it a centre for all peace-loving forces and for the collective maintenance of world peace. The USSR's activity in the League of Nations was significant in mobilising world opinion against the threat of war. It also worked to promote peace, security and cooperation among countries of different social systems on the basis of Lenin's principles of coexistence.

Only the Soviet Union's vigorous activity and diplomacy, supported by Communists and progressives throughout the world, made it possible to delay for a number of years the outbreak of the world war started by the aggressive fascist countries.

Because of the opposition of the Western powers, the USSR's long and intensive struggle to thwart fascist aggression did not bring about an effective system of collective security. However, the Sovet Union was able to upset the perfidious designs of the imperialist powers, which sought to form a united anti-Soviet front.

The Soviet Union was true to the mission which had been set for it by history, holding high the banner of peace and socialism, and standing in the forefront of the struggle against fascism and the war danger. It showed by its deeds that socialism stands for peace and progress.

CHAPTER XI

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE USSR ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1938-1939)

The Western Powers' Policy of "Appeasing" the Fascist Aggressors

Despite the growing danger of German and Japanese aggression, the ruling circles of Britain, France and the United States tried to use Germany and Japan against the Soviet Union. With German and Japanese hands they sought to destroy or at least substantially weaken the USSR and undermine its increasing influence. This was one of the main reasons for the policy of "appeasement" of the fascist aggressors pursued by the ruling circles of the Western powers. The reactionary governments of Britain and France with the support of the United States attempted to make a deal with Hitler Germany at the expense of the USSR, and also the states of Southeast Europe. The greatest activity in this direction was shown by Britain.

The British government's aim was to conclude a bilateral Anglo-German agreement. To achieve this aim it was prepared to grant Germany long-term loans and to agree on divided spheres of influence and markets. On the instructions of the British Foreign Office soundings were made by the British industrialist Rickens on February 9, 1937. In a conversation with von Papen Rickens stated that it would be possible to grant Germany a large loan on moderate interest terms over a period of 40 years.[1] Britain would also be prepared to agree to a tariff union between Germany and Austria. The question of such a union, said Rickens, ought to be highly approved on condition that Austria remained autonomous.[2]

The policy of collusion with Hitler received a fresh boost in Britain when the Chamberlain government came to power. In November 1937 the British Premier sent his closest associate Lord Halifax to Germany. The transcript of the talks between Halifax and Hitler in Obersalzberg on November 19, 1937[3] testifies to the fact that the Chamberlain government was ready to give nazi Germany "a free hand in Eastern Europe", but only on condition that Germany promised to redraw the political map of Europe in its favour "by peaceful

[1] HDA. Transcript of a Conversation Between the German Ambassador to Austria von Papen and the British Industrialist Rickens, February 9, 1937. (Published in part in the magazine *Istoriya SSR*, No. 3, 1962, pp. 5-6).

[2] Ibid.

[3] *Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1948, pp. 10-48 (in Russian).

means" and gradually. This implied that Hitler should undertake to coordinate with Britain its aggressive intentions with regard to Austria, Czechoslovakia and Danzig.[4]

Soon after this conversation between Halifax and Hitler the British government invited the French Premier Chautan and Foreign Minister Delbuse to London. Delbuse declared that the support that France believed it necessary to render Czechoslovakia under the mutual assistance pact went far beyond the limits approved by Britain. The Chamberlain government had thus begun to pressure France to repudiate its obligations under the pact of mutual assistance with Czechoslovakia.[5] Not without reason it was believed in London that the mutual assistance pacts that Czechoslovakia had with France and the USSR strengthened its international positions and for this reason the Chamberlain government conducted a policy of undermining these pacts.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting, at the end of January 1938 Henderson declared unambiguously that "Czechoslovakia will have to rid itself of its agreement with Soviet Russia".[6]

The policy of connivance at Hitler's aggression in Europe was aimed not only at "appeasing" Hitler and steering nazi Germany's aggression eastward, but also at isolating the Soviet Union.

At the end of April 1937 Henderson, one of the most active supporters of an agreement with nazi Germany, was appointed British Ambassador in Berlin. His appointment was further evidence of the persistent desire of the British government to make a deal with Hitler. This is confirmed by Anthony Eden in his memoirs.[7]

Germany's Seizure of Austria. Soviet Efforts for Collective Resistance to the Aggressors

On 26 January 1938 Hitler's Foreign Minister Neurat told the new British Ambassador that Germany would not allow Britain to intervene in the regulation of its relations with Austria.[8] The Chamberlain government failed to react to this nazi challenge and it was soon followed by a fresh aggressive act by Germany. On 11 February the Austrian Chancellor Schuschnig was summoned to see Hitler. In the form of an ultimatum the head of the Austrian government was asked to agree to a demand that would have reduced Austria to the status of a province of the Reich. But even this aggressive step aroused no

[4] Ibid.

[5] Public Record Office, Cab. 27/626, pp. 253-64.

[6] Public Record Office, Cab. 27/623, p. 41.

[7] *The Eden Memoirs. The Reckoning*, London, 1965, p. 447.

[8] *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. I, Washington, 1949, p. 190.

protest on the part of the British and French governments. After this Hitler's arrogance knew no bounds. On February 20 he publicly declared his intention of deciding the fate of the 10 million Germans living in Austria and Czechoslovakia and achieving the "unification of the whole German people".

In his speech of February 28 Chamberlain hypocritically declared that he could not see in Hitler's demands on Austria any breach of the Saint Germain treaty, although this document had given guarantees of Austrian independence. A similar statement was made by Chamberlain in the House of Commons on March 2.

It was becoming increasingly evident that the Chamberlain government's foreign policy was committed to achieving mutual understanding with the fascist powers and, above all, with nazi Germany. Describing this policy of the British government, the Soviet Ambassador to London informed Moscow on March 8, 1938: "Chamberlain has staked his reputation and the fate of his Cabinet on one card – a deal with the aggressor."[9]

The United States government showed no interest in the fate of Austria either. In this connection the Soviet Ambassador to Washington Troyanovsky wrote on March 2, 1938 to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in Moscow: "The fate of Austria does not evoke much concern here. The isolationists of all types are in general prepared to reconcile themselves to all fascist annexations as long as America does not begin active participation in international affairs and become involved in any agreement with Britain or expose itself to the risk of having to go to war."[10]

Hitler was further soothed by the message from Chamberlain which he received through Henderson on March 3 which proposed a regulation of Germany's colonial grievances.[11] Hitler was now left in no doubt as to the British position and he immediately set about realising his plan for the annexation of Austria.

While the Anschlüss was taking place Ribbentrop was in London, where he met many highly placed officials, including the Foreign Secretary Halifax. After this meeting, which took place on March 11, Ribbentrop reported to Berlin that no serious opposition by Britain need be expected if the Anschlüss was completed. He wrote: "I am convinced that England of her own accord will do nothing in regard to it at present, but that she would exert a moderating influence upon the other powers."[12] On March 12 German troops crossed the bor-

[9] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, Moscow, 1979, p. 42 (in Russian).

[10] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. XXI, Moscow, 1977, p. 109.

[11] *Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1948, p. 173.

[12] *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D (1937-1945), Vol. I, Washington, 1949, p. 263.

ders of Austria and the next day Austria was made a part of the German Reich.

The Soviet government was well aware of the grave danger to peace in Europe presented by Germany's seizure of Austria. Evidence of this is provided by a letter from the People's Committee of the Party, March 14, 1938. "The annexation of Austria," the letter states, "is the greatest event since the world war and is fraught with the gravest dangers, not least for our Union."[13]

The Soviet Union firmly condemned Hitler's aggression against Austria. In a statement to the press the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, speaking on behalf of the Soviet government, declared that "this time the violation has been committed in the centre of Europe, thus creating an indisputable danger not only for the 11 countries which at present have common borders with the aggressor, but also for all the states of Europe, and not only of Europe".

The Soviet government stressed that the prime danger was for Czechoslovakia, and it could then overflow and evoke new international conflicts. "The present international situation," this statement further declared, "confronts all peace-loving states, and particularly the great powers, with the question of their responsibility for the future of the peoples of Europe, and not only Europe."

The Soviet Union declared its readiness "to participate in any collective action that is decided upon jointly with the USSR and that is designed to check the further development of aggression and eliminate the increased danger of a new world bloodbath". The Soviet government agreed "to undertake immediate discussions with other powers in the League of Nations or outside it on practical measures dictated by the circumstances". "Tomorrow it may be too late," the statement pointed out, "but today the moment has not yet passed if all states and particularly the great powers, adopt a firm and unambiguous position over the problem of the collective salvation of peace."[14]

On the same day the text of this statement was sent to the governments of Great Britain, France, the United States and Czechoslovakia. However, there was no reply from the USA, and Britain and France turned down the Soviet proposals. In its official answer of March 24, 1938, Britain bluntly rejected any negotiations with the Soviet Union designed to build a united front against the fascist aggressors on the pretext that the taking of "coordinated action against aggression would not necessarily, in the view of His Majesty's government, have a favourable effect on the prospects for European peace". France also reacted negatively to the Soviet proposal. All this confirmed the fact

[13] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the CC CPSU(B) March 14, 1938.

[14] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, p. 60.

that the governments of Britain and France had no desire to organise collective resistance to the aggressor, although, as Macmillan acknowledges in his memoirs, "After Austria, it was clear that Czechoslovakia was next on the list of victims."[15]

Soviet Efforts to Defend Czechoslovakia against Nazi Aggression and the Munich Policy of the Western Powers

No sooner had it dealt with Austria then Hitler's government began preparations for the annexation of Czechoslovakia.

The Soviet government believed in the necessity of defending Czechoslovakia. In the critical months of 1938, when the fate of Czechoslovakia and its peoples hung in the balance, only the Soviet Union showed itself to be its true friend.

Even before the crisis in German-Czechoslovak relations, on March 15, 1938, V.P. Potyomkin, Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, in a conversation with the Czechoslovak envoy to the USSR Z. Firlinger regarding the possible consequences of the Anschlüss confirmed the Soviet Union's readiness to help Czechoslovakia under the mutual assistance pact if it was attacked by the nazi aggressor. "As for the Soviet Union," he assured the Czechoslovak envoy, "no one has ever been able to reproach it for failure to fulfil its international undertakings."[16] On the same day the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs confirmed this statement at a meeting with American correspondents. "In reply to the American journalists' question on what the USSR intended to do if Czechoslovakia were attacked," Firlinger reported, "Litvinov yesterday declared that the USSR would naturally fulfil its obligations as an ally."[17]

Shortly afterwards, on March 28, 1938, the Soviet military delegation that was in Czechoslovakia at the time assured the Chief of the General Staff of the Czechoslovak army that the USSR would help Czechoslovakia in the event of its being attacked.[18]

In April the Soviet government passed a decision jointly with France and Czechoslovakia to take all measures required to assure the security of the latter.[19] The Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet M.I. Kalinin publicly repeated the terms of the Soviet

[15] H. Macmillan, *Winds of Change. 1914-1939*, Macmillan, London, 1966, p. 545.

[16] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, p. 54.

[17] Ibid., p. 57.

[18] Ibid., p. 76.

[19] Ibid., p. 87.

Union's assistance to Czechoslovakia on April 26, 1938. In doing so, Kalinin added meaningfully: "It stands to reason that the pact does not forbid any of the sides from rendering assistance without waiting for France."[20] The Soviet government proposed negotiations between the General Staffs of the USSR, France and Czechoslovakia to discuss military measures required for helping Czechoslovakia. The Soviet government also agreed to supply Czechoslovakia with aircraft. In a conversation with Potyomkin Firlinger stated on April 27 that he had informed the Czechoslovak government of the Soviet Union's readiness to discuss measures for Czechoslovak security with France and Czechoslovakia. On May 25 Litvinov spoke to the French Foreign Minister of the need to hold a conference of the General Staffs to discuss methods of rendering military assistance to Czechoslovakia. On June 23 the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, speaking in Leningrad just at the moment when London was pressuring Czechoslovakia to make concessions to Hitler, firmly declared that the USSR would never exert such pressure on Czechoslovakia.

This clear statement of the Soviet attitude towards Czechoslovakia was designed to remind Britain and France that the protection of Czechoslovakia from Hitler's claims was an essential condition for the preservation of peace.

As the Soviet Embassy in Paris informed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in July 1938, "the French statesmen understand perfectly well that the fate of the post-Versailles reshaping of the world is now being decided in Czechoslovakia. They are aware that the annexation of the Sudeten lands to Germany and the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia will allow Germany to capture the decisive strategic positions for a future war and the position of leader in the whole of Central Europe". The great majority of French people would agree that present-day France was no longer capable of meeting Hitler Germany in a single combat. France's only ally was the USSR. "Nonetheless—and this fact is indisputable—the present government is least of all building its Czechoslovak policy with an eye to help from the USSR. Not a single decision that has yet been taken on the Czechoslovak question ... has ever been previously discussed or coordinated with us and has been brought to our attention (and not always) only post factum. Despite the existence of a Soviet-French pact and parallel pacts with Czechoslovakia ... the makers of French foreign policy have never seriously (not counting Bonnet's fragmentary conversations) proposed discussing jointly and on a practical basis the question that arises from our pacts."[21]

This position taken by the French government was determined to a

[20] M. I. Kalinin, *On the International Situation*, Moscow, 1938, p. 14 (in Russian).

[21] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, pp. 152-53.

considerable extent by the increasing pressure of the Chamberlain government, which was taking the line of "appeasing" nazi Germany at the expense of Czechoslovakia. The Soviet government therefore decided to draw the Chamberlain government's attention to the disastrous consequences that its policy towards Czechoslovakia could have. For this purpose it instructed its ambassador to visit Halifax and make a statement. On August 17 the Ambassador met Halifax and told him that the Soviet Union "is becoming increasingly disillusioned with the policy of Britain and France, that it considers this policy weak and short-sighted, and capable only of encouraging the aggressor to make further 'springs' ", and that the Western countries thus bear the responsibility for the approach and outbreak of a new world war. All the actions of Britain and France in connection with the threat to Czechoslovakia from Germany had "essentially amounted to attempts to restrain not the aggressor but the victim of the aggression...."[22]

This danger of Chamberlain's policy was also perceived by many of Chamberlain's own political friends, influential politicians in the Conservative Party, including Macmillan. In this connection he writes: "I was convinced that the only hope of avoiding war—either now or later—was a bold and powerful policy by which Hitler might perhaps be restrained."[23]

This was exactly the policy of resistance to aggression that the Soviet Union was conducting. In contrast to London and Paris, which were trying to make a deal with the nazi Reich, the Soviet government clearly and definitely informed the German government that the USSR would fulfil its obligations as an ally to Czechoslovakia.[24]

On August 22, 1938 the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs stated to the German Ambassador in Moscow Schullenburg that "the Czechoslovak people will fight as one man for their independence, that France in the event of an attack on Czechoslovakia will act against Germany, that Britain, whether Chamberlain wants it or not, cannot leave France without assistance, and that we, too, shall fulfil our obligations to Czechoslovakia". These words were calculated to restrain the nazis and force them to take thought of the consequences of their aggressive actions.

The People's Commissar told Schullenburg bluntly that "Germany is not so much concerned over the fate of the Sudeten Germans as in trying to liquidate Czechoslovakia as a whole. It wants to seize this country". If it came to war, the People's Commissar continued, the Soviet Union, which had promised Czechoslovakia its support, would "keep its promise and do everything in its power".[25]

[22] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, p. 171.

[23] H. Macmillan, op. cit., pp. 549-50.

[24] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, p. 175.

[25] Ibid.

On September 1 the French government for the first time officially asked the Soviet government whether the USSR could help Czechoslovakia and what help it could give if Poland and Romania objected to the passage of Soviet troops through their territory (at that time, as we know, the Soviet Union had no common frontier either with Germany or with Czechoslovakia). In its reply to this question on September 2 the Soviet government confirmed its intention of fulfilling its treaty obligations and proposed taking the necessary measures to influence Poland and Romania by means of an appropriate decision of the League of Nations. At the same time a fresh proposal was made for a conference of representatives of the Soviet, French and Czechoslovak armies, and also a conference of all the states interested in preserving peace. "We believe," the People's Commissar told the French Chargé d'Affaires, "that at the present moment such a conference with the participation of Britain, France and the USSR and also the passing of a joint declaration, which would undoubtedly receive the moral support of Roosevelt, would have a better chance of restraining Hitler from military adventure than any other measures."[26]

Regarding Soviet assistance, the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Krofta stated on 18 September to the US Ambassador in Czechoslovakia that with the situation as it then was the initiative must come from France, but in "private gave him to understand that in the event of extreme necessity the USSR could come to the aid of Czechoslovakia independently of France".[27]

On September 19, soon after the Anglo-French demands had been received, Benes approached the Soviet government through the Ambassador with the following questions: 1. Will the USSR, in accordance with the treaty render Czechoslovakia immediate and effective assistance if France remains loyal to it and also gives it assistance? and 2. Will the Soviet Union help Czechoslovákia as a member of the League of Nations on the basis of articles 16 and 17, providing for military sanctions against an aggressor, in the event of an attack by Germany?[28]

On September 20, 1938 the Soviet government gave positive answers in the clearest and firmest form to Benes's questions. Deputy People's Commissar Potyomkin instructed the Soviet Ambassador in Czechoslovakia S.S. Alexandrovsky to communicate to Benes the following: On behalf of the government of the Soviet Union you can reply in the affirmative to the first question -will the USSR render immediate and effective aid to Czechoslovakia if France remains loyal to it and also gives it assistance. Similarly, you can reply in the affirmat-

[26] Ibid., p. 188.

[27] *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1938*, Vol. I, Washington, 1955, p. 615.

[28] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, p. 232.

ive to the second question will the USSR as a member of the League of Nations help Czechoslovakia under articles 16 and 17 if in the event of a German attack Benes appeals to the Council of the League of Nations requesting the application of the above articles.[29] This meant that the USSR would render Czechoslovakia military assistance even without French participation on the condition that Czechoslovakia would defend itself and ask for Soviet aid.

On September 21 the Soviet representative declared at a plenary meeting of the Council of the League of Nations that urgent measures were needed in support of Czechoslovakia. He demanded that the question of German aggression should be placed before the League of Nations and reaffirmed the readiness of the USSR to perform its obligations and participate in a military conference of the three countries, and also the need to call a conference of the great European powers and other interested countries "to work out a collective demarche".[30] On September 23 in the Political Committee of the League the USSR once again affirmed that it was ready to fulfil its obligations.

In a conversation with Firlinger that took place on September 22, 1938 Potyomkin gave an affirmative answer to the envoy's question as to whether "the government of the USSR could, in the event of a German attack on Czechoslovakia, help the latter without waiting for a decision by the Council of the League of Nations". He stated the following: "To this question I replied by referring to Article 1 of the protocol of the signing of the Soviet-Czech treaty on mutual assistance providing for help to be rendered by both sides if for any reason the Council of the League should not pass the required recommendations or fail to reach a unanimous decision."[31]

Thus the Czechoslovak government could have no doubt that the USSR would fulfil its treaty obligations and give Czechoslovakia military assistance in the event of an attack by Germany. The Soviet Union did not confine itself to declarations. It brought up to its Western frontier 30 infantry divisions and put air forces and tank units in a state of alert. In two military districts alone—the Byelorussian and the Kiev 246 bombers and 302 fighters were concentrated.

This fact was also made known to Paris. For this reason on September 8, 1938, when the United States Ambassador in Paris Bullit asked Daladier whether it was true that "the Russians were concentrating large forces on the borders of Romania", Daladier confirmed that this information was true.[32] On September 23 the Soviet government warned the reactionary government of Poland, which had

[29] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, p. 240.
[30] Ibid., p.261.
[31] Ibid., p. 264.
[32] *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1938*, Vol. I, p. 615.

been seeking a deal with Hitler in the hope of participating in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, that if Polish troops invaded Czechoslovakia, the USSR would consider this an act of aggression and denounce the non-aggression pact with Poland of July 25, 1932 without further warning.[33]

Continuing its struggle for peace, the Soviet government declared on September 28, 1938 that "it regarded the immediate holding of an international conference as the most effective means of preventing further aggression and avoiding a new world war".[34]

Thus, at all stages of the Czechoslovak tragedy up to its culmination in Munich, the Soviet Union was prepared to fulfil its treaty obligations. What was more, it agreed to render Czechoslovakia military assistance even without the participation of France on the sole condition that Czechoslovakia itself should offer resistance to the aggressor and ask for Soviet assistance. This fact was acknowledged even by Benes in 1939 in a conversation with the daughter of T. Mann. A perfectly clear and convincing testimony on this point is to be found in the article by Klement Gottwald, published on December 21, 1949 in the newspaper *For a Lasting Peace and People's Democracy*. Other Czechoslovak statesmen also highly appreciated the position of the USSR and its desire to help Czechoslovakia throughout the crisis. The editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Prager Press* Laurin in a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in Prague S.S. Alexandrovsky on July 29, 1938 noted that Foreign Minister Krofta had "spoken in warm terms of the restrained and dignified position of the USSR that was of great help to Czechoslovakia in its struggle against from all sides pressure".[35] On October 15, 1938 a member of the Czechoslovak foreign ministry Cermak stated that "the behaviour of the USSR is irreproachable and its voice should be listened to more attentively.... No honest Czechoslovak can reproach the USSR and will always be grateful for its goodwill and readiness to help Czechoslovakia".[36]

Unfortunately for Czechoslovakia the Western powers did not support the Soviet Union's efforts to save that country. On the contrary, they betrayed it to nazi Germany.

The British government used the German claims on the Czechoslovak lands for its own selfish purposes for secret negotiations on an Anglo-German agreement to guarantee the security of Great Britain

[33] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, p. 269.

[34] Ibid., p. 311.

[35] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Soviet Ambassador in Czechoslovakia and the Editor-in-Chief of the Newspaper *Prager Press* Laurin, June 29, 1938.

[36] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Soviet Ambassador in Czechoslovakia and a Member of the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry Cermak, October 15, 1938.

and the inviolability of its colonial possessions. Hitler's price was Czechoslovakia.

On the British side in the negotiations were Chamberlain, Halifax and Horace Wilson (Chamberlain's closest adviser on economic affairs), while the German side was represented by Dirksen, Kordt (Counsellor at the German Embassy in London) and others. Moreover, it was made clear to the Germans that their solution to the Czechoslovak problem could take place only with the consent of Britain. The British government let it be understood that it objected to any unilateral German seizures that had not been sanctioned by Britain. The Chamberlain government made its agreements to these German annexations dependent on the conclusion of an Anglo-German agreement stipulating firm guarantees that Hitler in satisfying Germany's expansionist plans in Central and Eastern Europe would not attack Britain.

In his letter to Dirksen of August 11, 1938 Kordt emphasised that the British government would agree to the German demands only if Hitler consented to conclude a wide-ranging agreement with Britain. "The British," Kordt wrote, "consider any further increase in German power that occurs without the approval or even against their will a threat to themselves."[37] "They see this as a threat to the British world empire," Kordt continued, "inasmuch as the annexation is not accompanied by guarantees excluding the possibility of the German leadership's using all the forces of this colossal mid-European area against the British empire. They regard this possibility as the greatest danger that can be imagined."[38]

According to Kordt, Wilson said that if Britain and Germany reached agreement, the Czechoslovak problem could be solved even in the face of resistance from Czechoslovakia and France. In his letter to Dirksen of September 1, 1938 Kordt cites the following words of Wilson's: "If the two of us—Great Britain and Germany—find agreement on a regulation of the Czech problem, we shall simply remove any resistance that France and Czechoslovakia herself might offer to the solution of the question."[39]

The formerly secret archive papers of the British Foreign Office that have recently become available for research allow us to make substantial additions to the picture of preparations for the Munich conspiracy which Chamberlain and his closest advisers conducted in the deepest secrecy long before the deal was concluded. "Plan Z" that has now been revealed, the plan for surrendering Czechoslovakia to

[37] HDA. Letter of German Embassy Counsellor in London Kordt to Ambassador Dirksen, August 11, 1938.

[38] Ibid.

[39] *Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. II, p. 48.

Hitler, was worked out by Chamberlain, Halifax, John Simon and Samuel Hoare. A secret memorandum from Chamberlain's confidential adviser Horace Wilson, dated August 30, 1938, and submitted to the Foreign Policy Committee of the British government gives the following information about this plan: "There exists a plan that may be called Plan Z and is known and should be known only to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir John Simon), the Foreign Secretary (Lord Halifax), Sir Neville Henderson (British Ambassador in Berlin) and me."[40] This plan is also mentioned in Wilson's secret memoranda of August 31 and September 9, 1938. "The success of the plan," he writes, "if it is carried out, depends on total surprise and it is therefore extremely important that nothing should be said about it." Chamberlain told the other ministers in his Cabinet about this plan only on September 14, 1938, when according to Plan Z the question of Chamberlain's meeting with Hitler in Berchtesgaden on September 15, 1938 had already been agreed on. "The main bait for Hitler in the forthcoming negotiations," it was noted at a session of the inner cabinet, "is to be the possibility of achieving better relations between Germany and Britain."[41]

The substance of the plan was as follows. The British Prime Minister should wait until nazi Germany had created an extremely tense situation around Czechoslovakia so that under the pretext of "saving peace" he could personally visit Hitler for negotiations on the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and the handing over of the Sudeten lands to Germany. As a result of this visit Chamberlain hoped to get a mutual understanding with Hitler that would become the basis for a wide-ranging Anglo-German agreement. Throughout the summer of 1938 the Chamberlain government put the strongest pressure on the Benes government to force it to capitulate to Hitler. This is confirmed by Benes himself in his memoirs The *Munich Days*. "The British Ambassador Sir Basil Newton," Benes writes, "warned me that in the event of war the Czechoslovak republic would be in a regrettable position.... And added a warning from the British government that it was very doubtful if even in the event of victory it would be possible to restore Czechoslovakia to its present dimensions."

Giving its opininon of the British secret archives concerning the Munich conspiracy that have lately been revealed the bourgeois newspaper *The Guardian* states that "...the British Government's first purpose was to help Hitler dismember Czechoslovakia", and that Chamberlain "personally took steps to conceal this fact from Parliament".[42]

[40] *The Sunday Times*, January 5, 1969.

[41] Ibid.; I. D. Ovsyany, *The Mystery in Which the War Was Born*, Second Ed; Moscow, 1975, pp. 204-14 (in Russian).

[42] *The Guardian*, January 1, 1969.

On September 15, 1938 the Prime Minister flew to Berchtesgaden, where Hitler had his country residence. During the meeting the nazi ringleader declared that the western and north-western districts of Czechoslovakia should be taken away from her and handed over to Germany. Acting in accordance with Plan Z, Chamberlain consented to the separation of the Sudeten region from Czechoslovakia and its cession to nazi Germany.

The British Prime Minister then returned to London, where on September 18, 1938 he and the French ministers formulated the terms of the Anglo-French ultimatum to Czechoslovakia. Britain and France insisted that Czechoslovakia should agree to Hitler's demands, that is, to hand over the border areas and dissolve the mutual assistance treaty with the USSR. On the next day, September 19, the ultimatum was handed to the Czechoslovak government.

The Anglo-French ultimatum evoked an explosion of protest among the people of Czechoslovakia. On September 22 a general strike began under the slogan of not withdrawing Czechoslovak troops from the borders, announcing a general mobilisation, and blocking the advance of German troops into the Sudeten lands. Massive demonstrations were held all over Czechoslovakia and delegations were sent to the Soviet Embassy in Prague. On the night of September 21 the Soviet Ambassador was still receiving delegations at 4 a.m. and assuring them that "the USSR values the Czechoslovak republic and the interests of its working people and was therefore prepared to help in its defence against aggression. The rendering of assistance is complicated by the French refusal, but the USSR is seeking ways and will find them if Czechoslovakia is attacked and forced to defend itself."[43] At this critical moment in their country's history the Czechoslovak Communists urged the government to embark on decisive resistance to the German aggressors, firmly believing that the Land of Soviets would give Czechoslovakia the necessary assistance. "We know," Leonid Brezhnev has noted, "that the Czechoslovak working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party, have always seen in friendship with the Soviet Union the way of ensuring the independence and freedom of the Czechoslovak state. In the tragic days of Munich the Czechoslovak Communists urged the country to rely firmly on the Soviet Union, which had clearly demonstrated its fidelity to its duty as an ally."[44]

Benes in the memoirs that we have already mentioned is also compelled to acknowledge the Soviet Union's readiness to fulfil its obligations to Czechoslovakia: "I never had any doubt as to the actions of the Soviet Union," he writes. "I was confident that it

[43] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-193*, p. 263.

[44] L. I. Brezhnev, *On the Foreign Policy of the CPSU and Soviet State. Articles and Speeches*, Second Supplemented Ed., Moscow, 1975, p. 259 (in Russian).

would fulfil its obligations!"

But the Benes-Hodja government remained deaf to this appeal, took no steps to organise the country's defence, and was more concerned with covering up its capitulationist position. In this it was acting not in the interests of the Czechoslovak people but in the narrow class interests of the reactionary circles of the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie. This was why it was afraid to call upon the people to resist nazi Germany and did not appeal to the USSR for assistance.

What was more, the Benes government kept its preparations for capitulation shrouded in the deepest secrecy. As Germany's Chargé d'Affaires in Britain H. Kordt stated in his telegram to Berlin on August 30, 1938, the Czechoslovak government had agreed to accept Händlein's Karlsbad demands and expressed its readiness "to discuss its foreign policy relations with Soviet Russia".

However, the government did not dare to speak openly of its actual position, knowing the patriotic feelings and extreme disquiet of the working people of Czechoslovakia.

In an attempt to maintain face, the Czechoslovak government officially rejected the British and French demands on September 20.

On September 21 there came a second ultimatum from the British and French governments demanding submission.

Benes and Hodja, having committed themselves to capitulation, decided not to appeal for Soviet assistance and under cover of the new Anglo-French ultimatum, surrendered the country to Hitler. The Munich conference that was convened on September 29, 1938 was primarily designed to provide a legal formulation of this shameful deal with the aggressor. The treaty with Hitler and Mussolini was signed by Daladier and Chamberlain without the participation of representatives from Czechoslovakia. This was a betrayal of Czechoslovakia and a death sentence for the Czechoslovak state.

Under the Munich agreement Hitler was satisfied in his demands on the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, and annexation of the Sudeten lands to Germany. The Munich agreement also envisaged satisfaction of the territorial demands on Czechoslovakia made by the reactionary governments of Horthy's Hungary and Poland of the "cordon sanitaire".

The Munich agreement contained an obligation for Britain and France to subscribe to "international guarantees" of the new Czechoslovak borders, that were to be defined by an "international commission". Hitler for his part undertook to respect the inviolability of the new borders. As a result of the dismemberment Czechoslovakia lost nearly one-fifth of its territory and about one-quarter of its population and the German border came up to within 40 kilometres of Prague. Czechoslovakia was also stripped of half of its heavy industry. The Munich agreement was a cynical betrayal of Czechoslovakia by Britain and France, for whom Czechoslovakia was merely

a pawn in the vast imperialist game of collusion with Hitler.

The French government abandoned its ally and failed to fulfil its obligations.

The British diplomat Ivone Kirkpatrick, who took part in the Munich conference as a member of his country's delegation describes the position of France in his memoirs: "The French, including Daladier, were resolved to reach agreement at any cost. They were a horrid lot of men who showed no sign of shame at being parties to the dismemberment of their ally."[45]

After Munich it was obvious that the French promises given in the treaties of alliance were not worth the paper they were written on. This also applied to the French-Polish alliance and to the Soviet-French mutual assistance treaty of 1935. What grounds were there for hoping that the Third Republic would fulfil its obligations after it had failed to do so in regard to Czechoslovakia?

When Chamberlain landed at Croydon airport on his return from the shameful Munich conference, he made a flamboyant speech promising "peace for a generation". He quoted from Shakespeare's *Henry IV*: "Let us squeeze the flowers of salvation from the nettle of danger."

At the time the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* reminded the overconfident and blinkered British Premier that the phrase of Shakespeare's that he quoted was followed by another: "The enterprise that you have launched is dangerous. The friends you have named are not to be trusted, the moment ill chosen. And your whole conspiracy is too light to outway such serious difficulties."

Events showed that the great British dramatist's words fully applied to the schemes of the men of Munich.

It was not only the death sentence of the Czechoslovak state that was signed at Munich. Hitler was given an advance in the sense of further encouragement of German aggression on the condition of previous coordination of the German government's actions with Britain and France. At the same time Munich, as the CPSU(B) delegation's leader in the Executive Committee of the Comintern D.Z. Manuilsky stated in his speech at the 18th Party Congress "...was a conspiracy of reaction against the international working class, against the anti-fascist movement in all countries, against peace and freedom for all peoples".[46] But above all it was aimed against the USSR. This was the real point of Munich. The appeal of the communist parties of 10 European countries, and also Canada and the USA, of October 9, 1938, gave an accurate summing up of the deal that Chamberlain and

[45] *The Sunday Times*, May 31, 1959, p. 12; I. Kirkpatrick, *The Inner Circle. Memoirs of Ivone Kirkpatrick*, London, 1959, p. 128.

[46] *The 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), March 10-21, 1939, Verbatim Record*, Moscow, 1939, p. 55 (in Russian).

Daladier had made with Hitler. It stated: "The Munich betrayal has not saved peace. It has merely put it in fresh danger because it has struck a blow against the alliance of the peace forces of all countries and encouraged the fascists to intensify their demands since they now feel the support of the reactionary circles of various countries".[47] The noted British historian Wheeler Bennett was compelled to admit that "the objective of the Munich agreement had been to eliminate Czechoslovakia as an independent military, political and economic factor, and to prepare for further German expansion toward Poland and Russia".[48] In its desire to "channel" nazi aggression eastward, against the Soviet Union the Chamberlain government backed by the Daladier and Bonnet government refused to see that the Munich conspiracy to dismember Czechoslovakia also entailed a serious weakening in the positions of Britain and France. And yet this simple truth was perceived at the time even by those who shared Chamberlain's political beliefs—such notable Tory politicians as Eden, Churchill and others. As one of these Tory politicians, Harold Macmillan, writes in his memoirs this Tory group had a clear understanding of the great danger that would flow from "the betrayal of the Czechs".[49] Eden and Churchill also "understood the immense change in the whole strategic position of Central and Eastern Europe resulting from the virtual destruction of the Czech power to resist German invasion. The West was correspondingly weakened and the French Army's relative strength reduced. For some forty Czech divisions, threatening Hitler's eastern front, were immobilised and disintegrated; vast fortifications were surrendered; huge arsenals and stores fell into German hands and France's elaborate structure of defensive alliances in the east was virtually undermined".[50]

The Soviet press firmly opposed the Munich conspiracy of the Western powers with the aggressor at the expense of Czechoslovakia. This, for example, is what *Pravda* wrote about the Munich agreement: "The whole world, all the peoples clearly see that behind the screen of elegant phrases about Chamberlain's allegedly saving world peace at Munich, an act has been committed that in utter shamelessness has surpassed anything that has happened since the first imperialist war".[51] The French and British ruling circles spread false rumours alleging that the USSR had agreed to the Munich deal. The Soviet government exposed this slander. A TASS statement of October 2, 1938 declared: "The Paris correspondent of the United Press has reported to New York suggesting that the government of the USSR

[47] *Kommunistichesky internatsional*, No. 10, 1938, pp. 125-65.

[48] *Foreign Affairs*, October 1946, p. 38.

[49] H. Macmillan, op. cit., p. 562.

[50] Ibid., p. 563.

[51] *Pravda*, October 4, 1938.

authorised Daladier to speak at a conference of the four powers in Munich on behalf of the USSR. TASS is authorised to declare that the Soviet government did not, of course, give M. Daladier any authorisation whatever, and that this government has had nothing whatever to do with the conference in Munich and its decisions. The United Press report is an absurd fabrication from beginning to end."

The governments of Britain and France had entered into the conspiracy with Hitler with the support of the US government, which had approved their policy of encouraging nazi aggression and the shameful Munich deal. United States diplomats were sympathetic in their assessment of the conduct of London and Paris in committing the Munich betrayal. This is confirmed by the American president's message of congratulation to Chamberlain on the signing of the Munich agreement.

In Munich Hitler agreed at last (September 30) to sign a bilateral Anglo-German declaration that was in effect a non-aggression pact. This declaration stated: "The desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again ... to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe." Chamberlain was jubilant. He was confident that he had achieved his aim of collusion with Hitler.

On December 6, 1938 Bonnet and Ribbentrop signed a Franco-German declaration in Paris. The French and German governments stated that they would make every effort to develop peaceful and good-neighbourly relations between their countries, that no question of a territorial nature remained in suspense between their countries, and that both governments were resolved to have recourse to mutual consultation in the event of any complications arising out of these questions threatening to lead to international difficulties. This, too, was essentially a non-aggression pact between France and Germany.

After the signing of the Franco-German declaration of December 6, 1938 France's ruling circles conducted an active policy of collusion with Hitler in the hope that Germany would in the end attack the Soviet Union. It was no accident that Bonnet sent out an official memorandum to all French embassies declaring that as a result of the negotiations with Ribbentrop in Paris he had gained the impression that "German policy would continue to be oriented on the struggle against Bolshevism".[52]

For the sake of encouraging nazi aggression against the USSR the Daladier-Bonnet government was even prepared to sacrifice France's interests in Eastern Europe. During the post-Munich negotiations in Paris Bonnet told Ribbentrop: "France has renounced all political interests in Eastern Europe, and specifically agreed not to influence Poland against the conclusion of an agreement with Germany where-

[52] Paul Reynaud, *La France a sauvé l'Europe*, Vol. I, Paris, 1947, p. 575.

by Danzig would return to Germany, and Germany would receive an extraterritorial corridor across the corridor from East Prussia to Greater Germany."[53]

This was also confirmed by Britain's Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs Sargent in his letter of December 22, 1938 to Britain's Ambassador in Paris Phipps. "We are inclined to suspect," Sargent wrote, "that Ribbentrop may have left Paris with the impression that Bonnet has given him a free hand to do what he likes in Eastern Europe, without interference from France, much as Mussolini inferred, from Laval's attitude in Rome in January 1935, that he had a free hand in Abyssinia as far as France was concerned."[54]

After Munich it was obvious that the French government would not fulfil its obligations under the treaties with its allies. In the negotiations with Ribbentrop on the Franco-German declaration Bonnet for reasons of internal policy dared not repudiate the pact of mutual assistance with the USSR, the alliance with Poland and other obligations that Ribbentrop was trying to eliminate. This omission had to be made good. L. Noël (the former French Ambassador in Warsaw) writes in his memoirs that Bonnet intended "to denounce out of hand all the agreements concluded by France, by which he had in mind the Franco-Polish agreements and the Franco-Soviet pact of mutual assistance".[55] In Paris no attempt was made to hide the efforts that were being made to turn Germany against the Soviet Union.

Similar plans were being evolved even more actively in London. Chamberlain hoped that after Munich Germany would direct its aggressive aspirations against the USSR. During the Paris negotiations with Daladier on November 24, 1938 the British Premier said that "there might be in the minds of the German government an idea that they could begin the disruption of Russia by the encouragement of agitation for an independent Ukraine".[56] Chamberlain was worried about France possibly allowing herself to be drawn into conflict with Germany. Foreign Minister Bonnet set his mind at rest on this score. In his talks with Halifax in December 1938[57] the French Ambassador in London Corben also spoke of Hitler's anti-Soviet plans. The British Embassy counsellor in Germany G. Ogilvie-Forbes informed Halifax on December 6, 1938: "There seems to be a consensus of opinion in both nazi and non-nazi circles that the next objective, which may even be undertaken in 1939, is the establishment, with or

[53] *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers. 1940*, Vol. I, *General*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1959, p. 53.

[54] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. III, 1938-39, London, 1950, p. 366.

[55] Leon Noël, *L'agression allemande contre la Pologne*, Paris, 1946, p. 259.

[56] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. III, p. 366.

[57] Ibid., p. 436.

without Polish cooperation, of an independent Russian Ukraine under German tutelage."[58] In his report Ogilvie-Forbes also expressed some misgivings. The "tiger" might make its next spring not eastward but at the west. Such misgivings prompted Britain's rulers to further activate their policy of collusion with Hitler.

After Munich

Certain facts appeared to confirm the post-Munich hopes of Western reactionary circles that the fascist beast would now turn its attentions from the West and drive eastward.

On November 2, 1938, on instructions from Berlin a puppet state, the "Carpathian Ukraine", was set up in Trans-Carpathia that had previously belonged to Czechoslovakia. Hitler headed this "state" with Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists, who were totally supported by nazism and traitors to the Ukrainian people. The creation of the "Carpathian Ukraine" was used by the German press in a vociferous campaign for the adjunction of the Soviet Ukraine to the "independent" "Carpathian Ukraine". The nazis were counting on setting up a major centre of subversive activity against the USSR in Trans-Carpathia. Such anti-Soviet plans were lavishly publicised by the French bourgeois press. At the 18th Congress of the CPSU(B), in March 1939, the Central Committee report exposed the plans "to join an elephant, that is, the Soviet Ukraine, to an ant, that is, the so-called Carpathian Ukraine".

By their Munich policy of conniving at nazi aggression France and Britain did all they could to encourage Geramny's desire to take over the Ukraine. After the signing of the Munich agreement the British and French press began to devote a lot of space to the "Ukrainian question". London and Paris gave Hitler to understand that this question did not affect the interests of either Britain or France. To the men of Munich it seemed that their chosen political line was winning the day. Hitler, they imagined, was just about to launch a campaign against the Soviet Union.

But as the months went by, the world realised that the shortsighted calculations of the Munich policy-makers had suffered total failure.

Hitler's abandonment of his Ukrainian-Carpathian scheme was a great shock to the Munichites. In March 1939 he liquidated the "Carpathian Ukraine" and gave it to the Hungarian dictator Horthy, and it was accordingly occupied by Hungarian troops. The hopes that Hitler was about to attack the Soviet Ukraine faded. The weeks that followed soon revealed the tragic harm that had been done in Munich

[58] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. III, p. 387.

not only to Czechoslovakia, but to the world as a whole.

On March 15, 1939 Hitler clearly demonstrated that he had no regard either for Britain or France or for the promises that he had given them. The idea of the Munich agreement was that Germany should commit its rape of Czechoslovakia only with the approval of Britain and France. Under the terms agreed to by Hitler Germany ought to have respected the new Czechoslovak frontiers. But now German troops suddenly invaded Czechoslovakia, occupied the whole country and liquidated it as a state. Czechia was turned into a province of the German Reich—the "protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia". Slovakia was separated from Czechia and turned into a puppet republic. Its southern half was ceded in November 1938 to Horthy Hungary.

In the first days after the nazi annexation of Czechoslovakia Hitler's diplomats in London and Paris sent reassuring messages regarding the position of Britain and France to Berlin. Noting the anti-German feelings in Britain and the Chamberlain government's loss of prestige, Dirksen emphasised at the same time: "It is improbable that the incorporation of Czechia into Germany will result in German-British relations becoming increasingly strained to a point at which there is danger of war.... It would be wrong to cherish any illusions that a fundamental change has taken place in Britain's attitude to Germany."[59] From Paris the German Ambassador reported: "France will, in effect, do nothing about the situation created by German action in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia."[60]

The Soviet Union was the only great power that had not been tarnished by the Munich betrayal. Even at this point the USSR firmly came out in defence of the Czechoslovak people and condemned the fresh nazi aggression.

In its note of March 18, 1939 the Soviet government fiercely branded the illegal and violent act carried out by the nazis. It declared that the actions of the German government "could only be qualified as arbitrary, violent and aggressive". The Soviet Union, the statement went on, "cannot recognise the incorporation of either Czechia or Slovakia into the German Reich as justified and corresponding to the generally acknowledged standards of international law and justice or the principle of national self-determination". In conclusion the Soviet government pointed out that the actions of the German government had intensified the danger to world peace, upset the political stability of Central Europe, increased the already present elements of alarm in Europe and struck a fresh blow at the peoples' sense of security.[61]

Scarcely had the nazis completed their march into Prague when

[59] *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. VI, London, 1956, pp. 38-39.

[60] Ibid., p. 23.

[61] *Documents on the History of the Munich Deal, 1937-1939*, pp. 427-28.

fresh acts of aggression were launched. On March 22, 1939 Germany occupied Klaipeda, which belonged to Lithuania. On March 22, Germany imposed on Romania a crushing economic agreement that put the country's economy under German control. On March 21, the German government demanded in the form of an ultimatum that Poland should agree to the cession of Danzig (Gdansk) to Germany and the granting of an extraterritorial highway and railway across the "Polish corridor". On April 28, Germany made the threatening gesture of annulling the German-Polish non-aggression pact of January 26, 1934, making it understood that from now on it did not rule out the possibility of war against Poland.

To crown everything Germany followed up the violation of the Munich agreement with yet another slap in the face to the British government and Chamberlain personally by dissolving the Anglo-German naval agreement of 1935 on April 28. Germany then began demanding the restoration of its former colonies, which had been confiscated by Britain and France under the Treaty of Versailles.

The impunity with which Hitler committed his aggression encouraged Italy to take similar action. Already on December 22, 1938 it had dissolved the Convention on Mutual Respect for Territorial Integrity of the States of Central Europe and its consultative pact with France concluded on January 7, 1935. It then made territorial claims on France and on April 7, 1939 Italian troops invaded Albania and soon occupied the whole country. The international situation was becoming increasingly strained.

It was in such conditions fraught with the danger of war that the 18th Congress of the CPSU(B) was held. The Central Committee's political report made by J.V. Stalin, summed up the situation. The Central Committee condemned the fascist aggressors and exposed the essence of the Western powers' Munich policy that had been conducted under the screen of "non-intervention" and "appeasing" of aggression. "The policy of non-intervention," the report stated, "means connivance at aggression, the unleashing of war.... The policy of non-intervention expresses the underlying hope and desire not to prevent the aggressors from carrying on their evil work, not to prevent, let us say, Japan from becoming involved in war with China, or even better, with the Soviet Union, not to prevent, let us say, Germany from becoming involved in European affairs, from going to war with the Soviet Union, and to allow all belligerents ... to weaken and exhaust each other, and then when they are weak enough, to appear on the scene with fresh forces and act, of course, 'in the interests of peace' and dictate their own terms to the weakened participants in the war. Cheap and just what was wanted! "

The report contained a grave warning to the men of Munich: "The dangerous political game begun by the advocates of the policy of 'non-intervention'," it said, "may end in a serious failure for them."

Negotiations Between the USSR, Britain and France, Spring and Summer, 1939

The systematic encouragement of fascist aggression by the governments of Britain and France, and also the United States, the refusal of Britain and France to cooperate with the USSR, France's failure in its duty as an ally of Czechoslovakia were bound to evoke doubts among the Soviet government as to the readiness of the Western powers to oppose the fascist aggressors. The Soviet government was mindful, of course, of the regrettable experience of Munich and the policy of "non-intervention" in Spain. But it was unwilling to miss any chance of organising collective resistance to the aggressors.

On March 18, 1939, on receiving information concerning the German threat to Romania, the Soviet government proposed a conference of the most interested states—the USSR, Britain, France, Romania, Poland, and Turkey to define their position and attitude to the fresh German aggression. This proposal was made through the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to the British Ambassador. It came in answer to the Ambassador's question on the position of the USSR in the event of force being used against Romania by the nazi Reich. It was made exceptionally quickly, on that same day that the question was asked.

But the British government replied that it considered such a conference "premature".[62] Evidently its intention had been to incite the USSR to speak out in defence of Romania and thus become involved in a conflict with Germany; it had not wanted a conference or the adoption of any collective measures.

The well-known American journalist and historian William L. Shirer, who never had any liking for the USSR, acknowledges, however, that "in declining to respond to the Soviet proposal for an immediate conference to set up an anti-Hitler coalition Britain and France deliberately muffed the first opportunity to line up Russia on their side".[63]

However, it would have been tactically awkward to leave the Soviet initiative without any response. On March 21, 1939, the British government therefore sent to Moscow a fresh proposal for the signing of a declaration by Britain, the USSR, France and Poland envisaging immediate consultations with regard to measures for joint resistance to aggression against any European state.[64] Although the Soviet

[62] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace on the Eve of the Second World War (September 1938-August 1939). Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 246, 247 (in Russian).

[63] William L. Shirer, *The Collapse of the Third Republic. An Inquiry into the Fall of France in 1940*, New York, 1969, p. 424.

[64] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 264; *Documents on the British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IV, p. 436.

government regarded this measure as insufficiently effective, it gave its consent on the following day.

On April 1, however, the initiator of the proposal—the British government—suddenly announced that it considered question of a declaration superfluous. It will easily be understood that such a discouraging announcement offered little hope of any possibility of agreement with Britain on joint resistance to an aggressor.

The subsequent proposals that the British side made to the Soviet Union were similarly discouraging either. On April 14, 1939 the British government suggested to the Soviet government that a public statement should be made to the effect that "in the event of any act of aggression against any European neighbour of the Soviet Union which was resisted by the country concerned, the assistance of the Soviet government would be available, if desired, and would be afforded in such manner as would be found most convenient".[65]

This proposal made no provision for any obligations on the part of Britain and France in the event of a direct attack by Germany on the USSR, although with respect to each other both Western powers were bound by undertakings of mutual assistance.

What was more, the suggested version of the direct declaration contained an element of provocation. According to the British draft, the Soviet Union was to render "assistance", that is, it would be obliged to fight the aggressor in the event of an attack on any of the European neighbours of the USSR on the condition that Soviet assistance was "desired". The Soviet Union's European neighbours were Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland and Romania. The two latter states had guarantees from Britain and France. Therefore, in assisting them the Soviet Union could count on fighting the aggressor in alliance with two other great powers. However, in the event of a nazi attack on Finland, Estonia or Latvia, the British proposal offered the Soviet Union no hope of support from Britain and France. And yet for the USSR a German attack on the Baltic countries in view of their geographical position was no less dangerous than such an attack on Poland or Romania. By thus binding the Soviet Union to help the Baltic states, the British proposal gave Britain and France a free hand. The proposal envisaged extremely unequal burdens. The Soviet Union was placed under a heavy obligation, while the Western powers undertook considerably less.

If an Anglo-French-Soviet agreement on the basis proposed by the British had been reached, it would have shown Hitler the strategic path of aggression that he should choose in order to force the Soviet Union to fight in isolation. That path would have been along the Baltic—either from the sea or from East Prussia through Lithuania

[65] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, pp. 331, 333; *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. IV, p. 206.

into Latvia and Estonia, and also through Finland; in both cases this would give access to the approaches to Leningrad.

Special note should be taken of the provision in the British draft "if desired". These words imply that in event of aggression against any of the Soviet Union's European neighbours the USSR would be under an obligation to fight if the country concerned stated that it desired Soviet assistance. But the USSR would have to refrain from resisting the aggressor if that country decided that such assistance was undesirable. In other words, the Soviet Union would be under an obligation in the event of a German attack on any of its neighbours while they retained complete freedom of action. They were at liberty to refuse the assistance of the USSR and allow themselves to be taken over by Hitler, as boyar-bourgeois Romania and bourgeois Finland did in fact do, when they allowed German troops onto their territory.

On April 14 the French government proposed that the Soviet Union should agree to an addition to the Soviet-French Treaty of May 2, 1935 under which the USSR would undertake to help France if it were in a state of war with Germany as a consequence of rendering assistance to Poland or Romania.[66] This proposal also had serious deficiencies. It did not cover the possibility of aggression against the Baltic countries or a direct German attack on the USSR. Under pressure from London the French government went back on its own proposals and fell in with the British. Subsequently both Western powers in Moscow offered joint proposals that were totally unacceptable to the USSR. "It is clear," Shirer writes, "that at this point in time, with the Germans quite obviously preparing an attack on Poland and with Italy pushing into the Balkans, the French and the British were not very serious about lining up with the Russians in a military alliance against Hitler."[67]

On April 17, 1939 the government of the USSR handed the British and on April 18 the French governments its proposals for an equal and effective three-power mutual assistance treaty against aggression. The Soviet draft treaty proposed:

"1. That England, France and USSR conclude with one another an agreement for a period of five to ten years, by which they would oblige themselves to render mutually forthwith all manner of assistance, including that of a military nature, in case of aggression in Europe against any one of the contracting Powers.

"2. That England, France and USSR undertake to render all manner of assistance, including that of a military nature, to all East European states situated between the Baltic and Black Seas and bordering on the USSR, in case of aggression against these States.

[66] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 332; *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919 1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, p. 216.

[67] W. L. Shirer, op. cit., p. 425.

"3. That England, France and USSR undertake to settle within the shortest possible period of time the extent and forms of military assistance to be rendered by each of these States in fulfilment of paragraphs 1 and 2."[68]

The contracting sides would undertake, following the outbreak of hostilities, not to enter into negotiations of any kind whatsoever and not to conclude peace with the aggressors separately from one another and without the common consent of all three Powers.[69]

As one of the essential conditions of the agreement the Soviet government proposed that Britain, France and the USSR should discuss and settle in the shortest possible time the amounts and the forms of military aid to be rendered by each of the three states in the event of resistance to the aggressor. It insisted that the results of this understanding should be laid down in a military convention which should be signed simultaneously with the political agreement on mutual assistance. The government of the Soviet Union maintained that without such a convention the mutual assistance agreement would be ineffective. However, such an agreement did not suit the British government. Soon afterwards Halifax met the Polish Ambassador and told him that the Soviet proposal, although businesslike, went further than the British government was prepared to venture.[70]

The Soviet proposal was made at an extremely critical moment, with the Polish-German conflict deepening every day. Nevertheless the British government delayed its reply for three weeks, until May 8, 1939.

When it eventually arrived, the British reply boiled down to the proposal that the Soviet government "would undertake that in the event of Great Britain and France being involved in hostilities in fulfilment of these obligations, (i.e. guarantees to Poland, Romania, Turkey etc. *Ed.*) the assistance of the Soviet government would be immediately available if desired...".[71]

Summing up this proposal, the Soviet Ambassador in France wrote in his report to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on May 10, 1939, "it involves us automatically in war with Germany when Britain and France think fit to go to war with Germany because of obligations undertaken by them without our consent and without agreeing on them with us. They reserve only for themselves the right to define the moment and also the range of objectives of such a conflict. In assigning to us the role of blind follower in the scheme

[68] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, pp. 336-37.

[69] Ibid., p. 337.

[70] Ibid., p. 341.

[71] Ibid., p. 383; *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 487.

they refuse to guarantee us even against the consequences that our obligation would have for us".[72]

It is not hard to see that the new British draft of an agreement with the Soviet Union differed in few respects from the original British proposal. All the objections that had arisen from the first draft remained in the new one. In a telegram to the Soviet Ambassador in London the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs gave the following assessment of the British proposal: "The British and French demand unilateral and free assistance from us without undertaking to render us any equivalent assistance."[73]

On May 14, 1939 V.M. Molotov, who had replaced M.M. Litvinov as Commissar for Foreign Affairs on May 3, handed the British Ambassador in Moscow the following reply from the government of the USSR:

"The Soviet Government has closely examined the latest proposals of the government of Great Britain submitted to the Soviet government on May 8 and has reached the conclusion that they cannot serve as a basis for the organisation of a resistance front by the peaceful states against the further spread of aggression in Europe.

"This conclusion is motivated by the following:

1. The British proposals do not contain the principle of mutuality in relation to the USSR and place it in an unequal position because they do not provide for any undertakings by Britain and France to guarantee the USSR in the event of a direct attack on it by the aggressors, while Britain and France, and also Poland, have such a guarantee on the basis of mutuality already existing between them.

" 2. The British proposals extend quarantees to the East European states bordering on the USSR only in respect of Poland and Romania, with the result that the north-western borders of the USSR with Finland, Estonia and Latvia remain unprotected.

" 3. The lack of British and French guarantees for the USSR in the event of a direct attack by the aggressors, on the one hand, and the unprotectedness of the north-western borders, on the other hand, may serve as a provocative element for the channelling of aggression against the Soviet Union.

"The Soviet government assumes that to create an effective barrier of peaceful states against the further spread of aggression in Europe there must be, at least, three conditions.

" 1. Conclusion between Britain, France and the USSR of an effective mutual assistance pact against aggression;

" 2. Safeguards by the three great powers for the states of Central and Eastern Europe under threat of aggression, including also Latvia, Estonia and Finland;

[72] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, pp. 385-86.

[73] Ibid., p. 383.

"3. Conclusion of a specific agreement between Britain, France and the USSR on the forms and amounts of assistance to be rendered to one another and the guaranteed states, without which (without such an agreement) the mutual assistance pacts are likely to remain suspended in mid-air, as was shown by the experience of Czechoslovakia."[74]

In making these proposals the USSR was thinking not only of its own security but also of saving peace for all the nations of Europe. Explaining the need for the organisation of collective security, the Soviet Ambassador in London noted on May 22, 1939 in a conversation with Halifax: Although Russia "could in the long run win any war of defence single-handed", the British record of this conversation states, "she could not prevent war in general. She was therefore ready to collaborate with other Powers for this purpose".[75]

The British-French reply to the Soviet proposals of May 14, 1939 was not received until May 27, 1939.[76]

Unlike the previous British proposals, these proposals at last provided for British and French assistance to the Soviet Union in the event of a direct German attack on the USSR. However, the mechanism for the rendering of assistance was made dependent on a long and complex procedure established by the League of Nations, which rendered this assistance ineffective. The other shortcomings of the previous British draft had not been eliminated.

On seeing the British-French proposals, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR made a statement to the British Ambassador and the French Chargé d'Affaires on May 27: "Not only does the British-French draft not contain a plan for the organisation of effective mutual assistance for the USSR, Britain and France against aggression in Europe; it does not even show a serious interest on the part of the British and French governments in concluding an appropriate pact with the USSR. The British-French proposals suggest the notion that the governments of Britain and France are not so much interested in the pact itself as in talks about the pact. It is possible that these talks are needed by Britain and France for certain purposes. The Soviet government does not know what these purposes are. It is interested not in talks about a pact but in organising effective mutual assistance for the USSR, Britain and France against aggression in Europe. The Soviet government has no intention of participating only in talks about a pact the purposes of which are unknown to the USSR. The British and French governments can conduct such talks

[74] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 395.

[75] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, p. 632.

[76] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 421; *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, pp. 679-80.

with more suitable partners than the USSR."[77]

The insincerity behind the British government's behaviour was obvious to any unprejudiced observer. In this connection it is worth remembering the assessment of the Chamberlain government's behaviour which Roosevelt gave in a conversation with Professor Lasky, the well-known British scholar, during the latter's stay in the United States. Lasky passed on this assessment in a conversation with Soviet Ambassador Maisky in London on July 10, 1939. Specifically, Lasky stated: "From what Roosevelt says it would seem that he has the impression that the British government is concerned not with the question of concluding a vital international treaty, but behaving more as if it were buying a Persian rug at the bazaar. It is haggling over every trifle and putting up the price every half an hour. Roosevelt believes that this is the worst method of conducting negotiations in general, and negotiations with the USSR in particular."[78] Despite this fact the USSR launched repeated attempts to wring from London and Paris new constructive proposals on a mutual assistance pact built on principles of mutuality.

In its counter-proposals of June 2, 1939[79] the Soviet government tried to persuade Britain and France to amend the proposals in their drafts that might serve as provocative elements for an attack by Hitler Germany on the Baltic countries and, through them, on the Soviet Union. In accordance with the wishes of Britain and France the Soviet government expressed its readiness to extend its assistance also to Belgium, Greece and Turkey in the event of an attack by Germany on these countries, which Britain and France had given guarantees of independence. When the Western powers raised the question of support for Holland and Switzerland, the Soviet government also agreed to this.[80] It once again insisted that a military convention should be concluded between the three powers in the shortest possible time.

On June 15, 1939 the governments of Britain and France informed the Soviet government of their considerations concerning the latest draft.[81] They indicated above all that Britain and France still did not wish to undertake any obligation to render the Soviet Union immediate assistance in the event of its being involved in war with the aggressor following an attack by the latter on Latvia, Estonia and

[77] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 418.

[78] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Soviet Ambassador in London and Professor Lasky, July 10, 1939.

[79] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, pp. 432-33; *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. V, pp. 753-54.

[80] The proposal regarding inclusion of obligations to help Holland and Switzerland was subsequently annulled by Britain and France.

[81] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, pp. 450-51; *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, pp. 33-41, 79, 115-20.

Finland. And this was in a situation when the Soviet Union was committed to give immediate assistance to Poland, Romania, Belgium, Greece and Turkey in the event of their being attacked, Britain and France becoming involved in hostilities. Concerning the possibility of aggression in the Baltic countries both Western powers expressed only readiness to consult with the Soviet Union on the possibility of rendering assistance.

In view of the extremely critical international situation the Soviet government's answer was given on the following day, June 16. "The Soviet government," the Soviet reply to the Western powers states, "cannot possibly agree to this," that is, to the refusal of obligations for rendering assistance in the event of attack on the Baltic republics while the USSR was committed to helping the countries stipulated by Britain and France. "It cannot reconcile itself to the unequal position to which it is thereby assigned and which is humiliating for the Soviet Union." The Soviet government agreed to postpone the question of guarantees to other states as not yet timely, and proposed that the sides should restrict themselves to an understanding regarding mutual assistance in the event of aggression against one of the three contracting great powers.[82]

No less symptomatic was the refusal of Britain and France to agree to a military convention coinciding with the mutual assistance pact. The governments of the Western powers motivated their refusal by doubts as to the possibility of reaching specific military agreement in such a short time. On the question of methods, forms and amounts of military assistance they proposed limiting themselves to consultations between the General Staffs of the three powers.

The refusal of the British and French governments to accept the Soviet proposals on conclusion of an armistice or peace with the common enemy only as a matter of joint agreement aroused particularly acute doubts as to their sincerity.

The government of France was more inclined to come to an agreement with the USSR than the British government, but in all disputes that arose between the USSR and London the French government usually ended by following Chamberlain's lead. Both governments were energetically attacked in parliament for sabotaging the negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Noting the great popularity of the idea of Soviet participation in a mutual assistance pact with Britain and France among the most diverse political parties and groups represented in the French parliament, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris Y.Z. Surits wrote in his report to Moscow, July 11, 1939: "The necessity for such a treaty with us has been acknowledged by nearly all the deputies who spoke, al-

[82] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 452; *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 86e.

though this necessity was argumented, of course, not always on the same grounds or from the same motives, which differ from group to group and party to party. What they have in common and may be placed in brackets aside from this diversity is, of course, the sense of military danger, the awareness that France is threatened by war and the desire to have the USSR on its side in this war.

"Despite all the diversity of opinion that exists regarding the strength and power of the USSR, everyone agrees that it would be better to have this strength on the side of France."[83]

Under the pressure of public opinion, which insisted on measures to be taken against fascist aggression, the governments of Britain and France were forced to make certain concessions. They agreed to mention Finland, Estonia and Latvia in a special secret protocol and accept the obviously essential condition of the inadmissibility of a separate peace.[84] However, both Western powers refused to oppose Germany in the event of its practicising indirect forms of aggression—organisation of a coup d'etat in the Baltic countries or championing of pro-Hitler policy, although both these moves were the most likely way of bringing the Baltic countries under the heel of nazi Germany. In the second half of July, on the subject of indirect aggression the French government began to move towards the Soviet position, but London remained immovable.[85] As the TASS statement of August 2, 1939 pointed out, "one of the causes of the delay in negotiations is that the British formula leaves ... a loophole for the aggressor".[86]

This was perfectly well understood by the French and British representatives. In a letter to the British Foreign Office of July 20, 1939 William Strang, head of the Central European Department, who was conducting the negotiations along with the Ambassador in Moscow, wrote that the Soviet government is "determined to ensure that our assistance shall be forthcoming not only in the event of aggression of the classical type, but also in the event of aggressive action undertaken according to the new technique with which the Axis Powers have made us familiar. If we wish to understand how they feel about the Baltic states we have only to imagine what our own attitude would be to the establishment of German influence over Holland or Belgium. This, you will remember, was very much in our minds last

[83] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives, Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in Paris to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, July 11, 1939.

[84] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, pp. 476, 484-86; *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, pp. 140-42, 173-74, 193-94, 229-32, 308-10.

[85] *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1939*, Vol. I, Washington, 1956, p. 292; *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, pp. 276, 310-12.

[86] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 524.

February when we reached an understanding with the French about common action, in the event of German action against Holland" [87]

The reactionary, semi-fascist government of Poland, which did not want to conclude pact of mutual assistance with the socialist state of workers and peasants, played an extremely disreputable role in undermining the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations.

The Polish government's position was set forth by its Ambassador in Moscow Grzibowski in a conversation with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs on May 11, 1939. "Firstly the Polish government states," he said, "that the French initiative in the negotiations regarding guarantees to Poland does not accord with the point of view of the Polish Government, which feels that it alone can conduct such negotiations, and has not authorised France to conduct them. Secondly, Poland does not consider it possible to conclude a mutual assistance pact with the USSR in view of the practical impossibility for Poland to render assistance to the Soviet Union. In the meantime, Poland proceeds from the principle that a mutual assistance pact can be concluded only on conditions of reciprocity."[88]

To substantiate Poland's refusal to participate in a mutual assistance pact against fascist aggression the Polish Foreign Minister Beck invented his "doctrine", which stated: "The Polish government maintains the firm position of not entering into any agreements with any of its powerful neighbours against any of the others, that is, not with Germany against the USSR or with the USSR against Germany."[89]

From the Soviet side it was frequently pointed out that Beck's "doctrine" was untenable. The Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs stated at the time that there might have been some point in the Polish argument if the USSR had been proposing that Poland should take part in any scheme against Germany, against its interests, against the German people. The Soviet Union itself would have rejected any such scheme. "That, however, is not what proposed," he stressed, "the proposal is for a scheme of resistance to Germany's aggression, and this is quite a different matter."[90] A similar argument was also used by the Romanian government to justify its refusal to allow Soviet troops to pass through the territory of Romania. The Polish and Romanian governments coordinated their actions and set up a united front. The reluctance to help in organising collective resistance to fascist aggression was due to the fact that the Romanian government was seeking support in Berlin for its retention of the

[87] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 423.

[88] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 393.

[89] Ibid., p. 293.

[90] Ibid., p. 297.

Soviet territory of Bessarabia that it had seized in 1918. As for the Polish government, its position was determined by its general anti-communist and anti-Soviet line. It was waiting for an opportunity to carry out its plan for massive territoral annexations at the expense of the USSR and hoped to realise its aggressive plans against the USSR in collusion with Hitler Germany. The Polish rulers therefore frequently gave Hitler intimations of their readiness to join him in a war against the Soviet Union. Thus, the Vice-Director of the Political Department of Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs said to the Counsellor of the German Embassy in Warsaw on November 18 that Poland was prepared to "join forces with Germany in a campaign against the Soviet Ukraine".[91] A little later the Polish diplomat Karszo-Siedlewski in a conversation with the Counsellor of the German Embassy in Warsaw repeated this idea when he said that "in several years' time Germany would be fighting the Soviet Union while Poland, voluntarily or under compulsion, would be supporting Germany in that war". During a conversation with Ribbentrop in Warsaw, January 26, 1939, Beck made no secret of the fact that Poland had aspirations directed towards the Soviet Ukraine and a connection with the Black Sea.[92] In reply to German support for these aspirations he promised he would give further careful consideration to the question of Poland's adherence to the anti-Comintern powers.[93] As a result Berlin reached the conclusion that in the event of a German-Soviet conflict they would be able to rely completely on Poland. Talking to a German journalist, the German Ambassador in Warsaw stated on February 13, 1939: "We know that in the event of a German-Russian conflict Poland will be on our side, that is quite definite."[94]

Poland's ruling circles refused to revise their hostile policy towards the Soviet Union even when the country was under direct threat of a nazi attack. Meanwhile the Chamberlain government was deliberately dragging out negotiations with the Soviet Union on the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact between Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union. Speaking of the position adopted by Chamberlain and his supporters, Lloyd George stated in a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador on July 14, 1939 that the Chamberlain clique "still could not reconcile itself to the idea of a pact with the USSR against Germany and was trying now to accomplish approximately the following manoeuvre. On the one hand, the British government is putting pressure on Poland through political, military and financial channels and recommending moderation over the question of Danzig. On the other hand, by mobilisation of the navy, by air demonstrations in France

[91] Ibid., p. 100.
[92] Ibid., p. 171.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., p. 199.

(and probably in Poland) and by stressing the reliability of the Anglo-French alliance, the 'firm' speeches of British ministers and so on, the British government seeks to frighten Germany and induce it not to take the conflict over Danzig to the point of war". If this manoeuvre should succeed, Lloyd George continued, and "German aggression should for a time be halted or turn its spearhead in some other direction that would not necessitate Britain's fulfilment of its commitments to the European states, the need for urgent conclusion of a pact with the USSR would recede and Chamberlain would have the opportunity of trying once again to reach a settlement with the aggressors or, at least, of dragging out the signing of a treaty with the Soviet government".[95]

On July 17, 1939 the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs informed the ambassadors in London and Paris on the course of the negotiations. "Disagreement remains on the formulation of a definitive concept of 'indirect aggression' because our partners are resorting to all kinds of tricks and disreputable manoeuvres over this question.

"We are also insisting that the military section is just as much an indispensable part of the military-political treaty as is the draft of the treaty under discussion, and we categorically reject the Anglo-French proposal to get agreement first on the 'political' section of the treaty and only after this move on to a military agreement. This fraudulent Anglo-French proposal tears one treaty into two and contradicts our basic proposal on simultaneous conclusion of the whole treaty, including its military section, which is the most important and most political part of the treaty.... Unless the military agreement is concluded as an integral part of the whole treaty, the treaty will be a mere empty declaration."[96]

The non-intervention of the United States in the negotiations on the Anglo-French-Soviet mutual assistance pact was taken in London and Paris as silent approval of their policy of endlessly dragging out and ultimately sabotaging these negotiations. President Roosevelt, as the Soviet Ambassador in the United States reported in the summer of 1939, "has not ventured to use the moral and material resources at his disposal for exerting influence on the British and French with regard to their foreign policy".[97]

The American Ambassadors Kennedy in London and Bullit in Paris, exerted their influence in a sharply anti-Soviet style. In July, 1939 the State Department prepared a memorandum that distorted the aims of Soviet policy. Contrary to the will of President Roosevelt

[95] Ibid., pp. 491-92.

[96] Ibid., p. 496.

[97] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter from the Soviet Ambassador in the USA to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, June 6, 1939.

the neutrality law that forbid arms delivery to belligerent countries and ruled out this form of assistance even to the opponents of the fascist aggressors, remained in force. This encouraged nazi Germany and in fact was a support for it.

In this period when the threat of fascist aggression hung over the world, the London and Paris governments continued their pretence of negotiations with the Soviet Union in the hope of keeping out of the approaching war. In this complex situation only "the Soviet Union persistently worked for a system of collective security which would have bridled the aggressors and prevented a second world war".[98]

Negotiations of the Military Missions in Moscow

A new and convincing testimony to the unwillingness of the Western powers to conclude a mutual assistance pact with the USSR was provided by their attitude to the Soviet proposal to begin military negotiations between the representatives of the armed forces of the USSR, Britain and France, put forward on July 23, 1939.

The Western powers had been steadily resisting the idea of concluding a military convention simultaneously with the mutual assistance pact. Only on July 25, did they at last accept this proposal, but even then were in no hurry to bring it about.

It is highly indicative also that they began drafting of the military convention only on July 13, that is, three months after the launching of negotiations on the mutual assistance pact. Neither London nor Paris had been in a hurry to complete these negotiations, so by the time the British and French military missions left for Moscow (August 5) the draft convention was not yet ready.

The Chamberlain government used this fact as a pretext for further delays in opening the military negotiations in Moscow. Pleading the necessity to complete the drafting of the military convention and coordination of the line of conduct at the Moscow negotiations, it decided to send the British and French military missions not by air but by a slow mail and passenger boat *The City of Exeter*, which took more than five days to reach Leningrad. All this time the British and French delegations spent supposedly discussing how to handle the negotiations in Moscow and coordinating the drafts of the convention's various articles. But, as the head of the French delegation, General Doumenc, writes in his *Diary of the Stay of the French Military Mission in Moscow, 1939*, discovered among German captured archives, most of the time was spent in table tennis matches between the British and French teams.

The draft that the delegations eventually produced did not in

[98] L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Moscow, 1972, p. 54.

practice provide for real military cooperation between the armed forces of Britain and France and those of the Soviet Union. Specifically, it did not envisage such cooperation for the defence of Poland and Romania in the event of an attack on those countries by Germany. This is clearly evident from Article 7, the draft of which stated:

"The defence of the Polish and Romanian territories is essentially the task of the military forces of these two powers. Moreover, the three contracting powers agree mutually that on receipt of requests from either or both of the above states, they will help them by sending such available aid as may be considered necessary, particular consideration being given to air assistance, war material and specialists".[99]

The absence of any serious intention on the part of Britain and France to conclude a military cooperation agreement with the USSR is also shown by the fact that the missions were headed by such second-grade figures as Admiral Drax and General Doumenc, besides which Admiral Drax had no powers to conduct negotiations. The Soviet military mission was headed by the People's Commissar for Defence K. Ye. Voroshilov, who had wide powers giving him the right "to conduct negotiations with the British and French military missions and sign a military convention on questions of organising the military defence of Britain, France and the USSR against aggression in Europe".[100]

A most convincing fact revealing the true intentions of the Chamberlain government is the directive received by the British mission on setting out for the negotiations in Moscow. It stated that "the British government is unwilling to enter into any detailed commitments which are likely to tie our hands in circumstances. Endeavours should therefore be made to confine the Military Agreement to the broadest possible terms. A coordinated declaration on policy would be more or less what is required". "If the Russians propose that the British and French governments should offer Poland, Romania or the Baltic states anything involving cooperation with the Soviet government or the general staff, the delegation should not make any undertaking but refer back to London. The delegation must not discuss the question of defence of the Baltic states because neither Britain nor France have given guarantees to these countries...."

The instruction thus made it incumbent on the mission to avoid concluding any specific agreement and not to discuss the question of the passage of Soviet troops through the territory of Poland and Romania, without which the USSR, which had no common borders with Germany, was practically incapable of participating in military

[99] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VII, London, 1954, p. 596.

[100] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, pp. 535-36.

operations against Germany. The governments of Britain and France, while agreeing to begin negotiations with the USSR had not set out to conclude a binding and equal agreement on military cooperation for the defeat of nazi aggression in Europe.

The British Ambassador in Moscow Seeds, on reading this instruction, reported back to London: "Under such conditions I consider that military talks are likely to produce no result beyond arousing once again Russian fear that we are not in earnest, and are not trying to conclude a concrete and definite agreement."[101]

On August 13, the question of plans for joint operations by each of the three powers in the event of an attack by the main aggressor or group of aggressors were discussed at two sessions (morning and afternoon). Even at the morning session it became obvious that the British and French had no plan whatever for joint operations against a common adversary and no definite proposals to the time and place for the concentration and deployment of forces. Instead of concrete military plans that the Soviet delegation insisted on bringing forward for consideration, the British and French military missions proposed discussing the obvious "general aims" and "general principles" of military cooperation, which, as the head of the Soviet military mission pointed out, "could serve as material for some abstract declarations".

Unlike its Western partners, on August 15 the Soviet military mission presented a detailed military plan providing for joint operations by the Armed Forces of the USSR, Britain and France in all the possible cases of aggression. According to this plan, the Red Army was to mount against the aggressor in Europe 136 divisions, 5,000 heavy artillery pieces, 9,000 to 10,000 tanks and 5,000 to 5,500 military aircraft.

The Soviet plan also provided for the participation of Poland and Romania in joint military operations. It contained three variants that provided for action by the USSR, Britain and France as follows:

1. In the event of an attack by the block of aggressors against Britain and France, the USSR was to deploy an equivalent of 70 per cent of the armed forces deployed by Britain and France against Germany, the main enemy. This alternative provided for the mandatory participation in the war of Poland which was to mass 40 to 45 divisions on its western borders.

2. In the event of an attack by the aggressor against Poland and Romania these two countries were to engage all their armed forces and the Soviet Union an equivalent of 100 per cent of the armed forces deployed by Britain and France directly against Germany.

3. In the event of an attack by the main aggressor against the USSR across the territory of Finland, Estonia, and Latvia, France and

[101] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VI, p. 682.

Britain were to start military operations against the main aggressor without delay with an equivalent of 70 per cent of the forces deployed by the Soviet Union.[102]

As we see from General Doumenc's *Diary*[103], which also included verbatim reports during the talks with the French military mission, the Soviet delegation had a low opinion of the value of the reports of the British and French missions. Doumenc writes that from the very first Shaposhnikov "let it be understood that he had not been deceived by the deliberate vagueness" of the reports, to whose terms of reference the French and British delegations confined themselves in expounding their possibilities and potentials. "We have heard," Shaposhnikov stated, "general propositions concerning the use of the French forces expounded by General Doumenc, but we have heard nothing concrete. The same may be said of the operational plan expounded by General Heywood. In the same way we have not heard anything concrete about naval operations by a combined French and British fleet." During the meetings on August 14 the Soviet delegation posed the main question: "How can the armed forces of the USSR make contact with the German nazi forces in the event of an attack by Germany of France, Poland or Romania or on all these countries simultaneously?" The Soviet side's posing of the question of the right of Soviet troops to pass through Polish and Romanian territory caused confusion among both the British and French military missions. This is what Doumenc's *Diary* has to say about the British and French reaction: "The curtain was thus lifted. It had been agreed among us from the outset that we should not talk about a Russian entry into Poland, but now we were forced to deal with this question because it was hard to get away from the iron logic of Marshal Voroshilov. Although Admiral Drax, with a rather sad face, tried to pretend that he was very glad to hear of the Russian intentions in relation to Poland and Romania, and though general Doumenc tried to reduce the question to the initial concentration of forces in order to steer away from these ominous Soviet plans, Voroshilov renewed his attack." Voroshilov said, the *Diary* goes on to relate, "our conference of three great powers and representatives of our rank should reckon with the fact that if Romania and Poland do not ask for help or ask for it too late, their forces will be destroyed. These troops should be used as an additional allied asset: it is in the interests neither of England nor of France, nor of the USSR that they should be destroyed. I insist that we must from the start discuss the principle of Soviet troops passing through Poland and Romania; this is essential."

[102] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, pp. 574-77.

[103] IIDA. *Diary of the Stay of the French Military Mission in Moscow, 1939.*

"There was a silence, and then General Doumenc suggested a recess. The delegates trooped into the garden and Admiral Drax said: 'I think our mission is finished'."[104] In his diary Doumenc summed up the outcome of the August 14 meeting: "This was the result of the notion that it would be possible to obtain Russian help without touching upon these entirely legitimate questions."

Instead of an answer in concrete terms the British and French military missions tried to avoid discussing this question and confined themselves to vague statements about Poland and Romania being independent states and only the governments of these countries being able to answer the question; the Soviet government should therefore put these questions to the Polish and Romanian governments, and so on.

Realising, however, that this attitude to the question was quite untenable inasmuch as Poland was an ally of Britain and France, who had undertaken to help it, the British and French missions stated by way of concession that if Marshal Voroshilov "expressly insists we can get in touch with London and Paris for them to put the following question to the governments of Poland and Romania. If the Soviet Union becomes our ally can they allow Soviet troops to pass through the territory of Poland in the area of the Vilno corridor and in Galicia, and also through the territory of Romania in order to participate in operations against Germany in the event of aggression on her part? It is possible that Germany will invade Polish territory tomorrow". On the grounds that no more time should be wasted, the British and French suggested continuing the negotiations. Once again the Soviet mission responded to the desire of its negotiating partners on the assumption that London and Paris would take the necessary steps in Warsaw to gain a positive answer to the question.

In his answering statement the head of the Soviet military mission agreed to go ahead with the negotiation, while insisting that an urgent solution of the problem he had raised should be found for. "Of course, the Soviet military mission has not forgotten that Poland and Romania are sovereign states." This was why it had asked the British and French missions to answer the question "will Soviet armed forces be allowed to pass through the territory of Poland (Vilno corridor and Galicia) and Romania in the event of aggression against Britain and France or against Poland and Romania?" The Soviet mission considered this question entirely legitimate because France had a political and military alliance with Poland and Britain had given Poland a guarantee of its independence.

The Soviet mission declared that the question it had raised was not

[104] These words of Drax are also quoted by the American historian L. Mosley, who used British sources (see L. Mosley, *On Borrowed Time. How World War II Began*, Random House, New York, 1969, p. 335).

only political but also to a great extent military. In view of the fact that Britain and France had treaties of alliance with Poland, and that Poland, Romania, France and Britain were all under the threat of military attack, it was quite natural that the British and French governments should decide this question with the governments of Poland and Romania.

The Soviet military mission expressed its regret that the military missions of Britain and France had no precise answer to the question of Soviet armed forces passing through the territory of Poland and Romania.

It was stressed by the Soviet side that "without a positive solution of this question the whole project for concluding a military convention between Britain, France and the USSR would, in its opinion, be doomed to failure".

Voroshilov's statement put the British and French in a corner. The above mentioned *Diary* sums up the situation as follows: "The Soviet answer was extremely clear; and, unfortunately for us, its logic was implacable. It was self-delusion to try to negotiate with the Soviet Union without previously solving at least on the strategic plane the question of Russo-Polish cooperation.

"This lengthy and highly dramatic session marked the end of real negotiations. From then on the sessions that continued twice daily were merely a means of passing time and forcing the formidable Voroshilov to show patience in expectation of the hypothetical answer to the telegram that had been sent to Paris on that day, and which read as follows: 'The three delegations were in session twice on August 13 and had one long session on August 14. The Soviet delegation evinced its desire to obtain results and submitted that there was no need to discuss general propositions with which everyone was in agreement but that a study should be made of concrete questions ... the Soviet delegation today made the conclusion of a military pact conditional on the assurance that its army would be able to pass through Polish and Romanian territory. Our Ambassador, like myself, believes that the quickest solution to the question would be to send general Valin to Warsaw to obtain from the Polish General Staff secret agreement to the principle allowing the Franco-British delegation the opportunity to discuss this question in its military aspect at the conference without officially involving the Polish government. The British military mission is completely in agreement with this'."

The Anglo-French mission thus resorted to a piece of crude deception. In the course of the negotiations they promised to refer to Paris and London the question that the Soviet mission had raised and assured the Soviet mission that the governments of Britain and France would bring up this question with the Polish and Romanian governments. But in fact, as the text of the telegram to Paris testifies, the

British and French missions did not propose that their governments should raise the question with the Polish government. They proposed reducing the whole matter to the obtaining of some sort of general agreement from the Polish General Staff, but without raising the matter officially with the Polish government.

However, even this dubious proposal of Doumenc's hung in the air. The Daladier government kept silent. The only "news" received from Paris by the French military attaché in Moscow General Palas was a telegram from the war ministry forbidding General Valin to go to Warsaw since Paris had decided to send General Musse there.

The long silence of Paris and also the refusal to allow General Valin to go to Warsaw upset all Doumenc's cards and complicated any further play by the British and French diplomats in Moscow.

To find some way out of the situation Doumenc proposed discussing the Anglo-French draft of Articles 1 and 2 of the draft military convention, which formulated general aims and objectives. The formulations of these articles showed that Britain and France had not even seriously considered concluding an agreement for true cooperation with the USSR. It is extremely characteristic that the missions of the two Western powers did not dare to risk showing the Soviet representatives the text of Article 7 of their draft, where it was stated in black and white that the USSR in the event of a German attack on Poland or Romania should confine itself to the role of supplier of military equipment.

The negotiations thus reached a standstill in the first days, from August 13. On August 17 it finally became clear that any further meetings would be pointless. "The atmosphere in the evening on August 17 was agonising," a member of the mission, Captain Beaufre[105] writes in his reminiscences. "We were on the verge of breakdown with all the grave consequences that this would have entailed, and yet we still had no answer to our telegrams on the main question that Voroshilov had raised with such insistence".[106] To create the impression of continuing negotiations, Drax proposed making an adjournment until 21 August on the grounds that by that time an answer from London and Paris might be received. Reporting this decision to Paris, Doumenc wrote on August 17: "The session for August 21 was decided upon only to create the impression for the outside that negotiations had not broken down. For the negotiations to continue I must now be able to reply 'yes' to the question that has been raised."[107] On the same day Doumenc undertook a fresh manoeuvre by sending Captain Beaufre to Warsaw in order to show a desire to speed up the answer of the Polish government. "The chief

[105] Later general.

[106] A. Beaufre, *Le drame de 1940*, Paris, 1965, p. 153.

[107] Ibid., p. 153.

aim of this mission," Beaufre writes, "was to show the Russians that steps were really being taken to obtain an answer to the notorious question they had raised. We were sure that in this way a respite would be achieved at least for the period of the trip."[108] Beaufre admits that "the problem was not to get an answer out of the Poles as to whether they would agree to allow Soviet troops through their territory or not, but to find a loophole that would allow negotiations to continue".[109]

This ambiguous Anglo-French playing at negotiations that had begun from the outset began to look more and more suspicious every day and naturally put the Soviet government on its guard. K.Ye. Voroshilov was therefore instructed to cut short this shameful game by demanding from Drax and Doumenc a clear answer to the question of the possibility of Soviet troops passing through Polish and Romanian territory. Accordingly on August 21 Voroshilov categorically turned down the British proposal to make a second adjournment in the negotiations, until August 23.

In doing so he stated that "if positive answers are received to our questions, our conference will have to assemble as early as possible. If the answers are negative, I see no possibility in general for the further functioning of our conference because the questions we have raised, as I have already informed our high conference, are for us decisive and cardinal. If no positive answers to them are received, there will probably be no need to assemble at all."[110] If, Voroshilov said, even "this axiomatic question is turned by the French and British into a big problem requiring prolonged study, it will mean that there is every reason to doubt their desire to have real and serious military cooperation with the USSR".[111]

The British and French governments were well aware that the boyar Romania and *cordon sanitaire* Poland were resolutely opposed to cooperation with the USSR. At the same time it was clear to everyone that the security of Poland and all Europe from German aggression could be ensured only by the means indicated by the Soviet Union, that is, by concluding a Soviet-Anglo-French defensive alliance with the participation of Poland. The Polish bourgeois government, however, would not hear of Polish participation in such an alliance. Moreover, it did not want to allow Soviet troops to pass through Polish territory and thus contributed to the disruption of the Moscow three-power negotiations. This Polish attitude towards the USSR was no secret for London or Paris. And therefore if the governments of Britain and France had really been interested in agree-

[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., p. 156.
[110] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 624.
[111] Ibid., p. 627.

ment with the USSR they ought to have previously brought up the question of cooperation with the Soviet Union (and particularly the passage of Soviet troops) before Poland and Romania and to have insisted on their agreement.

This obvious fact is acknowledged by many bourgeois historians. William Shirer, whom we have already mentioned, confirms that "the French had a chance to bring the Poles to their senses about Russian help when the Polish Minister of War, General Kasprzycki, accompanied by Colonel Jeklicz, Deputy Chief of the Polish General Staff, arrived in Paris in the middle of May to work out a military convention with France. Here was an opportunity for General Gamelin, who conducted the talks for the French, not only to insist that Poland, in its own interests, agree to accept Russian military aid but, indeed, to make France's military commitments to Warsaw conditional upon it. Gamelin, however, did not even mention the matter during a whole week of negotiations. Without even inquiring how the Polish General Staff planned to stem the Germans without Soviet aid he signed on May 19 an accord promising that the French Army would launch a major offensive in the West if the Germans attacked Poland. There is no record of Daladier having pressed his Generalissimo to bring up the question of Soviet military assistance to Poland, nor of Bonnet's having done so, though the latter did his best to sabotage the Polish military agreement...."[112]

Nevertheless the Soviet government did everything in its power to bring the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations to a successful conclusion.

There is also specific evidence of this in the statements made by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in his conversation with the US Ambassador in Moscow Steinhart on August 16,[113] that is, at the very moment when the negotiations had come to a standstill through the fault of Britain and France. "The Soviet government," Molotov told Steinhart, "is taking a very serious attitude to the situation in Europe and to its negotiations with Britain and France. We attach great importance to these negotiations, as can be seen from the great amount of time that we have devoted to them. From the outset we have treated the negotiations not as a matter that can be concluded by the passing of some general declaration. We believe that it would be wrong and unacceptable for us to confine ourselves to a declaration. As at the beginning of the negotiations and now, therefore, we have raised the question in such a way as to discuss concrete circumstances of mutual assistance for the purpose of counteracting any possible aggression in Europe. We are not interested in declaratory statements in negotiations, we are interested in decisions of a concrete nature involving mutual obligations to counteract any possible ag-

[112] W. L. Shirer, op. cit., pp. 431-32.

[113] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, p. 605.

gression. We see the point of these negotiations only in measures of a defensive nature in the event of aggression. And we should not have agreed to take part in any agreements involving attacks on anyone. Thus we value these negotiations to the degree that they can have significance as an agreement on mutual aid for defence from direct and indirect aggression."[114]

Thus the Soviet government tried to obtain positive results right up to last moment. Unfortunately, however, this depended not only on the Soviet government.

Despite the fact that nazi Germany had openly concentrated its forces on the border with Poland and the Polish government had reliable information on the invasion that was to take place within the next few days, the reactionary ruling clique continued its former implacably anti-Soviet policy and refused to enter into negotiations with the Soviet Union for organising resistance to the nazi aggressor.[115] In line with this principle the Chief of the Polish General Staff General Stachiewicz stated on August 20, 1939 to the British military attaché that "in no case could admission of Soviet troops into Poland be agreed to and that the mind of the Polish Government was made up".[116]

Despite all this the governments of Britain and France did not even try to exert pressure on Warsaw to obtain the Polish government's consent to the passage of Soviet troops through Polish territory. Instead Daladier decided to launch the dubious "diplomatic manoeuvre" of sending a telegram to Moscow for Doumenc stating that Doumenc could with the agreement of the French Ambassador sign the military convention with the USSR with the proviso that this convention should have the subsequent approval of the French government.[117] The telegram did not, however, say anything about whether the Polish government would agree to allow Soviet troops through Poland, without which, as we know, the Soviet Union maintained that no military convention could be signed. Nevertheless, on August 22, when Doumenc met Voroshilov he insisted on continuing the joint sessions and even proposed considering a "draft" of the military convention that he had hastily compiled. Doumenc did not even scruple to utter an obvious lie when in answer to Voroshilov's question he stated that he had "received a message from the government that the answer to the basic question is positive. In other words, the government has given me the right to sign the military convention, which will contain a statement about permission for the

[114] Ibid.

[115] *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, No. 2, 1971, p. 46.

[116] *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, Vol. VII, p. 70.

[117] *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, No. 2, 1971, p. 50.

passage of Soviet troops at the points which you yourselves will determine, that is, through the Vilno corridor and, if necessary, in accordance with concrete conditions, also through Galicia and Romania". In fact Daladier's telegram had said nothing about this. In the course of their further conversation Voroshilov finally decided that the British government knew nothing about the "text" of the military convention that Doumenc had proposed for immediate discussion.

In reply to Voroshilov's question on the position of the governments of Poland and Romania Doumenc pleaded ignorance, although he must have been well aware of the actual position of the Polish rulers.

Poland's refusal to allow the passage of Soviet troops through Polish territory was for Britain a suitable pretext to avoid concluding an agreement with the USSR and it is seen as such by many bourgeois historians. Thus the West German historian M. Freund has written: "The Western powers wanted to square the circle—the Soviet Union was to go to war with Germany while remaining, as it were, in the stratosphere and not moving its army against Germany through the territory of Poland, that is, by the only possible route! The negotiations between the Western powers and the Soviet Union therefore failed as they were bound to fail."[118]

Lloyd George also flatly condemned the position of the Chamberlain government. He declared on July 23, 1939: "Lord Halifax visited Hitler and Goering. Chamberlain flew into the Fuhrer's arms three times in succession....Why send only a Foreign Office bureaucrat to represent us in an infinitely more powerful country which was offering to come to our aid? There is only one answer. Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Lord Halifax and Sir John Simon do not want any association with Russia."[119]

The Secret Anglo-German Negotiations

Very soon after the beginning of negotiations with the USSR on a mutual assistance pact for defence against fascist aggression the Chamberlain government began to probe the possibilities of the renewal of negotiations with Hitler. To prepare British public opinion, the government inspired in a number of prominent British newspapers articles in favour of a dialogue with Berlin.

The first attempt to begin talks with the German government was

[118] *Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges in Dodumenten*, Bd. III, München, 1956, S. 79.

[119] W. P. and Zelda K. Coates, *A History of Anglo-Soviet Relations*, London, 1945, p. 614.

made at the beginning of May 1939. On May 12, 1939, on instructions of Chamberlain's economic adviser Horace Wilson, whom Chamberlain had entrusted with the task of charting the foreign policy programme, a member of the British parliament H. Drummond Wolf, arrived in Berlin.

In a conversation at the German Foreign Ministry he immediately stressed that "that political combinations that Great Britain has engaged in do not exclude the possibility that she may offer Germany throughout the world, and particularly in the East and in the Balkans, a field for the economic activity that is hers by right".[120] Soon Chamberlain himself joined in the scheme. On June 8, 1939 he told Trot Zu Zolz, who was closely associated with the nazi administration, that in his opinion "the only solution to the European problem lay through Berlin and London".[121]

In his report to Berlin of June 24, 1939 on Chamberlain's policy and proposed diplomatic moves Dirksen was not mistaken when he asserted that despite the talks with the USSR on a mutual assistance pact, Chamberlain was preparing the ground for negotiations with Hitler. In Dirksen's opinion such an unexpected initiative from Chamberlain was well within the realm of probability. Despite all the shifts in public opinion the rumour was current in London that as soon as the talks with the Russians were concluded he would make fresh proposals to Germany that might well come about in one form or another.[122]

However, talks with Germany could not be launched openly because of the spreading anti-nazi and anti-Hitler feelings among the broad mass of the British people, who demanded condemnation of Hitler's aggression through the conclusion of a mutual assistance treaty with the USSR. These anti-nazi feelings extended to substantial sections of the liberal bourgeoisie and intellectuals largely due to the efforts of the nazi press and propaganda, which denigrated and insulted Britain and its people in every way. The nazis had stepped up this anti-British campaign at the beginning of April 1939, when the Chamberlain government had announced its "peace front" policy and given guarantees to Poland, and then to other small European countries.

The effect of nazi propaganda in arousing anti-Hitler feelings in Britain was vividly described by F. Hess, Counsellor of the German Embassy in London, in his letter to Ribbentrop of June 24, 1939: "Britain is like a lion," he wrote, "that had all the hair torn out of his tail, then been kicked in a certain part of its anatomy and finally

[120] *USSR in the Struggle for Peace...*, pp. 396-97.

[121] *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 682.

[122] *Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik. 1918-1945*, Bd. VI, Baden-Baden, 1956, S. 645-55.

been spat upon for so long that it has flown into a rage."[123] These British feelings made it impossible for the Chamberlain government to come to terms openly with nazi Germany. To soothe the British public the Chamberlain cabinet launched the negotiations with the USSR on a mutual assistance pact but deliberately kept them dragging on for as long as possible. At the same time it prepared a political and economic programme with which to tempt Hitler into an all-embracing Anglo-German agreement.

At the very beginning of July 1939, a whaling conference opened in London which was attended by State Counsellor Wohlthat, who was an important figure in the "four-year plan" and the British government immediately took the initiative of proposing Anglo-German negotiations in the deepest secrecy. The British side was represented by Horace Wilson and Minister of the Board of Trade Hudson, who proposed to Hitler's emissary, "far-reaching plans for Anglo-German cooperation to open up new and exploit existing world markets" and share them on a world scale. Hudson named China and the Soviet Union among the countries whose markets were to be shared out. Wilson proposed concluding a non-intervention pact, which "was to include a delimitation of the spheres (Grossräume) of the Great Powers, in particular as between Britain and Germany".[124] More specifically, it was planned to conclude an agreement on the colonial question with an eye to setting up a "broad colonial zone in Africa" that Germany would be able to take part in exploiting. Besides this the plan envisaged the conclusion of other agreements giving Germany wider access to world sources of raw materials and the conversion of East and Southeast Europe into a sphere of German influence, and so on.

Reporting on these secret Anglo-German negotiations in the summer of 1939, the German Ambassador in London von Dirksen wrote that the Chamberlain government aimed to achieve a broad and peaceable agreement with Hitler Germany, which could be regarded as an Anglo-German entente. In the political sphere there was to be an Anglo-German non-intervention pact. "The underlying purpose of this treaty," Dirksen noted, "was to make it possible for the British gradually disembarrass themselves of their commitments toward Poland, on the ground that they had by this treaty (with Germany *–Ed.)* secured Germany's renunciation of methods of aggression."[125] Emphasising the importance of this pact of non-intervention, Dirksen writes: "Agreement with Germany would enable Britain to extricate

[123] HDA. Letter of F. Hess to Ribbentrop, June 24, 1939.

[124] *Documents and Materials Relating to the Eve of the Second World War*, Vol. II, p. 69.

[125] Ibid., p. 183.

herself from her predicament in regard to Poland on the ground that the non-aggression pact protected Poland from German attack; England would thus be relieved of her commitments. Then Poland, so to speak, would be left to face Germany alone."[126]

Such an Anglo-German treaty would be a suitable cover for an understanding on delimitation of spheres of interest and markets between Britain and Germany. Moreover, Britain promised "to respect Germany's spheres of interest in East and Southeast Europe".[127] On the condition of suitable agreements in the political and economic spheres being achieved the British government promised Hitler "to get France to give up her alliance with the Soviet Union and her commitments in Southeast Europe". In addition the Chamberlain government agreed that Britain "would also drop her treaty negotiations with the Soviet Union".[128]

It was quite obvious from the undoubted fact of the British ruling circles' readiness to break off negotiations with the USSR and betray Poland, which was the main object of the Anglo-German conflict, that both the guarantees to Poland and the negotiations with the Soviet Union were for the British government only the small change with which it intended to pay nazi Germany for ensuring the interests of British imperialism. As Dirksen quite correctly surmised, for the British ruling circles "the connections that have appeared in recent months with other states are merely a reserve fund for genuine reconciliation with Germany", and "these connections will be eliminated as soon as the only important and worthwhile aim, of agreement with Germany, is achieved". Even "the involvement of France and Italy would be of secondary importance". In short, Britain's ruling circles were ready to pay for a profitable imperialist deal with Hitler Germany not only by repudiating their guarantees of the independence of Poland, Romania, Turkey and Greece, not only by breaking off negotiations with the USSR, but also by betraying the interests of their closest ally, France.

In 1939 none of this was known with the kind of documentary precision that illuminates the question today. But the observable facts and what filtered into the press provided sufficient evidence of the duplicity of British policy. It was clear that the negotiations with the Soviet Union and the guarantees to Poland and other countries were for Britain only "reserve funds" for pressuring the nazis into striking a deal. This was the purpose of the British and French negotiations in Moscow on a military convention, by which they hoped to make Hitler more amenable in his talks which followed its example. The course of the negotiations with Britain and France demonstrated ever

[126] Ibid., p. 187.
[127] Ibid., p. 186.
[128] Ibid.

more clearly the impossibility of reaching a reliable and effective accord. The Soviet Union was becoming isolated in the face of nazi aggression, which now threatened its immediate borders. Urgent measures had therefore to be sought to ensure the security of the USSR.

Aggravation of German-Polish Relations. The Soviet-Japanese Conflict

In August 1939 German-Polish relations became strained to breaking point. A German attack on Poland was expected every day. In its anti-Soviet blindness the Polish government rejected Soviet assistance and would not even agree to allow Soviet troops to pass through its territory. It thus committed national betrayal by leaving the country virtually defenceless. If Poland fall which was inevitable in view of the superiority of German forces, the Soviet people would be threatened with the appearance of nazi armies on the approaches to Minsk.

The general strategic position of the USSR had gravely deteriorated owing to the extremely hazardous situation in the Far East created by the aggressive policy of the Japanese militarists. Not only had the Japanese militarists invaded China. They were also conducting active preparations for war against the Soviet Union and for an invasion of the Mongolian People's Republic, with which the USSR had signed a treaty of alliance in 1936. Soviet assistance to the Chinese people in their heroic struggle against the Japanese aggressors throughout the war between Japan and China had made Japanese policy even more hostile toward the USSR and Soviet-Japanese relations continued to worsen. In 1938 the Japanese militarists launched an armed attack on Soviet territory in the region of Lake Khasan, not far from Vladivostok, but were driven back by units of the Red Army.

As a move in its preparations for war against the USSR the Japanese government attempted to conclude a bilateral treaty with Germany against the Soviet Union. In 1938, as the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin Osima later related, in reply to a German question on the possibility of signing a new treaty between Germany and Japan against all "potential enemies of the rapidly reviving Rome-Berlin-Tokyo triangle, the Japanese stated that the treaty should include articles excluding Britain, France and the USA from its sphere of action". In February 1939 a Japanese mission headed by Prince Ito arrived in Berlin and again explained to the Germans that Japan could "sign a treaty aimed only against Russia".[129]

[129] S. T. Leonidov, "From the History of Normalisation of Soviet-Japanese Relations after the Second World War", *Japan. Problems of History*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 261-92 (in Russian).

The Japanese side did not confine its activities to building military-political alliances against the USSR. Japanese diplomacy also tried blackmail as a means of wringing unilateral concessions from the Soviet Union. This happened, for example, during the Soviet-Japanese negotiations in February-March 1939 on renting of fishing areas to Japan, when the Japanese Ambassador in the USSR Togo during a conversation with People's Commissar Litvinov even tried to use the threat of war as an "argument" to obtain concessions from the Soviet side.

Reporting on these talks to the Central Committee of the CPSU(B), Litvinov wrote on March 9, 1939 that Togo "was threatening with war" and that only "when he realised that his tirade had made no impression on me ... did Togo finally allege that he was eager for a peaceful settlement of the problem".[130]

Slightly more than two months passed and the Japanese militarists tried to put their threat of war into practice by launching an armed attack on the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic in the region of the River Khalkhin-Gol. In accordance with its treaty of alliance the Soviet Union rendered the MPR military assistance, and for four months, from May to September 1939, Soviet and Mongolian troops fought bitter battles against the invading forces of Japan and Manchuria. This was a real war with substantial use of tanks and aircraft, and it ended in complete victory for Soviet arms. The Red Army upheld the honour and dignity of the Soviet socialist state and defended the Mongolian People's Republic and the security of the Soviet borders in the East.

Just at this time, on July 24, 1939, the British government had concluded with the Japanese government what became known as the Arita-Craigey agreement (named after the Japanese Foreign Minister and the British Ambassador in Japan). Under this agreement the conflict that had arisen over the Japanese seizure of the British concession in Tiensin was settled and Britain promised not to support any measures or actions that might hinder the achievement of Japanese military objectives in China. In other words, the British government guaranteed the security of the Japanese rear in China. And at this time the Japanese forces were engaged in military operations on Chinese territory against China and also against the USSR and the MPR. By concluding the Arita-Craigey agreement the British government directly encouraged Japanese aggression against the USSR and its ally the Mongolian People's Republic.

The Soviet Union's international position had thus become extremely perilous. War was liable to break out at any minute on its Western borders and in the East fighting was already in progress.

[130] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Letter of the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to CC CPSU(B), March 9, 1939.

The negotiations with Britain and France had brought no results. They had merely cleared up the situation by showing the total unwillingness of the Western powers to cooperate with the Soviet Union in the struggle against fascist aggression. In the Far East, as in Europe, these powers were encouraging the aggressors to go to war with the USSR. The Land of Soviets was thus faced with the prospect of simultaneous war in Europe and the Far East coupled with hostile capitalist encirclement, in complete isolation, without allies. The Soviet government had to do everything possible to save the people and the country from the mounting danger that threatened them.

The Soviet-German Treaty of Non-Aggression

In the tense political atmosphere of spring and summer 1939 Soviet-German negotiations were launched and conducted first on economic and then on political questions. In 1939 the German government fully realised the danger of going to war against the Soviet Union. It lacked the resources that it was to acquire in 1941 through the seizure of Western Europe. The nazis had not yet lost their heads through easy victories. They were not yet prepared to satisfy their aggressive aims by means of war with such a powerful adversary as the Soviet Union and believed that for a time it would be more reasonable to look for spoils in other directions. At the beginning of 1939 the German government proposed a trade agreement with the USSR.

Documents show that Berlin's proposal to start negotiations with the USSR was not an isolated act of German diplomacy. At this time the Germans and Italians were exchanging opinions on the possibility of reviewing the policy of the two countries toward the USSR. Both sides had agreed that such a review was desirable.[131] Before deciding whether to make sounding on the possibility of improving relations with the USSR the German government summoned G. Hilger, Counsellor of the German Embassy in Moscow, to Berlin.

Hitler asked him whether he believed "that Stalin might, under certain circumstances, be ready for an understanding with Germany".[132] Berlin then took the following step. On May 17, 1939 a prominent official of the German Foreign Ministry Schnurre met the Soviet chargé d'affaires in Germany G. A. Astakhov and tried to discuss with him "the subject of improving Soviet-German relations". In reply to Astakhov's statement that the Soviet government "had no information on any fundamental change in German policy", Schnurre began to "insist on the Germany's having no aggressive aspirations whatever in relation to the USSR", and asked what would be needed to dispel

[131] *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 259.
[132] G. Hilger, A. Meyer, *The Incompatible Allies*, New York, 1953, p. 296.

our distrust.[133] The Soviet representative confined himself to the remark that any improvement in the atmosphere between the two countries depended on the German government.[134]

At the same time the Soviet government felt that in view of the political tension that existed between the USSR and Germany it would be impossible to have negotiations on expanding trade and economic relations between the two countries. It was this circumstance to which the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs drew the attention of the German Ambassador on May 20, 1939. He observed that economic negotiations with Germany had been launched several times of late but invariably without results. The Soviet government was therefore justified in telling the German side that it had the impression that the German government was playing some kind of game instead of conducting serious negotiations on trade and economic questions. Germany, the People's Commissar said in a conversation with Schulenburg, should look for another country as a partner in such a game, and not the USSR, which had no intention of playing. This was a very clear warning to the German side.

However, the latter continued putting out feelers as to the possibility of negotiations to improve political relations. This question was raised among others by the State Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry Weizsäcker in a conversation with the Soviet chargé d'affaires in Berlin on May 30, 1939.[135] An even more definite statement on this subject came from the German Ambassador in the USSR Schulenburg when he met Astakhov for talks held on June 17, 1939 in Berlin.[136] Referring to his conversations with Ribbentrop, Schnurre once again assured Astakhov on July 25, "of the need for improvement of the political relations between the USSR and Germany" and hinted that all attempts by the German side to raise this subject with the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs had been left unanswered.[137]

On August 3, 1939 Ribbentrop in a conversation with Astakhov stated that there were no outstanding issues between the USSR and Germany "in the whole territory from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea" and proposed signing a Soviet-German protocol. The Soviet government rejected this proposal because it still hoped that progress

[133] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation of the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin with Schnurre, May 17, 1939.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation between the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin and Weizsäcker, May 30, 1939.

[136] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Memorandum by Astakhov to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on Conversation with Schulenburg, June 17, 1939.

[137] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Memorandum by Astakhov on Conversation with Schnurre, July 25, 1939; *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D, Vol. VI, p. 1049.

would be made in the negotiations between the USSR, Great Britain and France.

On the same day Schulenburg and Molotov met. After the conversation Schulenburg sent a telegram to Berlin on August 4, saying: "My general impression is that the Soviet Government is at present determined to conclude an agreement with Britain and France, if they fulfil all Soviet wishes."[138] But the subsequent course of negotiations with Britain and France dashed any hope the Soviet government still had of concluding a satisfactory agreement.

The Soviet government was also taking into consideration the Munich betrayal, France's virtual violation of her treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia and also the USSR, the betrayal of the Spanish Republic by the Western powers, and the Anglo-Japanese deal. When the negotiations with Britain and France came to a standstill owing to their unwillingness to cooperate with the USSR, and when reports were received of the secret negotiations between Germany and Britain, the Soviet government became totally convinced of the impossibility of effective cooperation with the Western powers in organising joint resistance to the nazi aggressor. Nevertheless, it left the door open in case the British and French governments eventually realised that it was in the national interests of Britain and France to join with the USSR in organising resistance to the nazi aggressor. This could be done only by concluding an equal and effective treaty of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union. The Soviet government did not therefore react to the telegram of the German Foreign Ministry of August 15 requesting that the Minister of Foreign Affairs should be received in Moscow for negotiations. On August 20 the request from Berlin was repeated with fresh insistence.

In the circumstances the government of the USSR then made the only correct decision to agree to the visit by Ribbentrop for the negotiations which culminated on August 23 in the signing of the Soviet-German Treaty of Non-Aggression. The conclusion of this treaty temporarily relieved the USSR of the danger of war without allies and on two fronts (against Germany in the West and Japan in the East) and gave it time to strengthen its defences. The Soviet government agreed to this treaty only after it had finally become apparent that Britain and France were unwilling to cooperate with the USSR in resisting nazi aggression.

The British and French governments had calculated that the German government, fearing the Soviet-Anglo-French negotiations, would make a deal with them. But now it transpired that it had decided to reach agreement with the USSR.

In a conversation with the French Ambassador on August 23, 1939 the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs stressed that the Soviet

[138] Ibid., p. 1062.

government had decided to sign a treaty with Germany only when it had become finally convinced that nothing positive would come of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations.[139]

The Soviet government had spotted the game played by the British and French diplomats in time. Highly significant in this context are the statements of the former Yugoslav Ambassador in the USSR M. Gavrilović on his conversation with J. V. Stalin, reported by the Ambassador on June 16, 1941 at a dinner in the American Embassy in Ankara. The record of Gavrilović's statement was made by Robert F. Kelley, first secretary of the US Embassy in Turkey. "Mr. Gavrilović," Kelley writes, "said that, in his conversation with Stalin, the latter had referred to the negotiations with the Allies prior to the signature of the Non-Aggression Pact between the Soviet Union and Germany. Stalin had stated that the fact that the Allied negotiators were subordinate officials not vested with full powers, the attitude of Poland in refusing to consent to the passage of Russian troops or the flight of Russian aeroplanes over Poland, the attitude of the French Military Offices which indicated that France was planning to remain behind the Maginot Line and not to undertake any offensive operations against Germany, made it clear to the Soviet Government that the conclusion of any pact with the Allies would result in the Soviet Union having to bear the full brunt of the German attack at a time when the Soviet Union was in no position to cope with a German attack";[140] and when an undeclared but bitter war was being fought with Japan in the Far East.

As the documents show, the Soviet government remained true to the idea of collective security to the end.

In a conversation with the French Ambassador in Moscow Naggiar, Molotov stated that "a non-aggression pact with Germany was not inconsistent with a mutual defensive alliance between Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union".[141] On August 24 in a telegram to the British Embassy in Washington the Foreign Office quoted the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs as saying that "after a bit, say a week, negotiations with France and this country might be continued".[142]

But the Chamberlain and Daladier governments immediately recalled their missions from Moscow thus demonstrating their unwillingness to continue negotiations with the USSR. More, Chamberlain initiated fresh attempts to make a deal with Hitler at the expense of

[139] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation of the USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs with the French Ambassador in the USSR, August 23, 1939.

[140] *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1941*, Vol. I, Washington, 1958, pp. 313-14.

[141] *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers, 1939*, Vol. I, Washington, 1956, p. 307.

[142] Ibid., p. 311.

Poland. At a cabinet meeting on August 26 Chamberlain stated that the main thing was that if Britain left Herr Hitler in peace in his sphere (Eastern Europe), he would leave us in peace.[143]

On August 26, K. Ye. Voroshilov gave an interview repudiating the Reuter's report alleging that he had told British and French missions that in view of the signing of the Soviet-German treaty the Soviet government regarded further negotiations with Britain and France as pointless. "The negotiations with Britain and France," he stated, "had ended not because the USSR concluded a non-aggression pact with Germany; on the contrary, the USSR had concluded a pact of non-aggression with Germany owing to the fact, among others, that military negotiations, with France and Britain had come to a standstill because of insuperable disagreements."[144]

The Central Committee of the CPSU (B) and the Soviet government, guided by the directives of the 18th Party Congress to be cautious and not allow the warmongers to draw the Soviet Union into a conflict, took the decision to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany. This was, of course, a forced decision. The necessity for this act was understood even by some of the French participants in the Moscow negotiations. For example, the French military attaché in the USSR General Pallas in his report to Paris of August 23, 1939 said that he still believed that for the USSR the solution to the question in the sense of an agreement with Germany was the only way out as a last resort and perhaps a means of pressure for the more rapid conclusion of a solid, thoroughly welded coalition which, as it had always seemed to him, was the desire of the Soviet leaders.[145]

"The Central Committee of the CPSU(B) and the Soviet government," writes Marshal G. K. Zhukov in his memoires, "based themselves on the fact that the pact did not guarantee the USSR against the threat of nazi aggression, but did give them the opportunity of gaining time to strengthen our defences and prevented the creation of a united anti-Soviet front."[146]

Even this temporary extension of peace was extremely important for the USSR.

* * *

The Munich conspiracy between Britain and France and nazi Germany not only led to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia; it also struck a blow at collective security in Europe. The Munich deal

[143] Public Record Office. Cab. 23/100, p. 277.

[144] *Pravda*, August 27, 1939.

[145] *Istoriya SSSR*, No. 3, 1962, p. 23.

[146] G. K. Zhukov, *Reminiscences and Reflections*, Vol. I, Second ed., supplemented, Moscow, 1974, p. 253 (in Russian).

prepared the ground for the further expansion of Germany in the East, in the direction of Poland and the USSR.

Nazi Germany and fascist Italy took advantage of the Munich policy of the Western powers to go ahead with further annexations. By the spring of 1939 the tension in Europe had reached a fresh peak. But even in these critical circumstances the Soviet Union continued its policy of organising a peace front to resist aggression. With this in mind the Soviet government proposed to the governments of Britain and France that they should conclude a treaty of mutual assistance.

During the negotiations on this agreement and the subsequent talks on a military convention with Britain and France the Soviet Union did everything in its power to reach agreement with them, but the advocates of a deal with Germany and Japan at the expense of the USSR who had come to power in these countries refused to reckon with the legitimate demand for guarantees of its security. Only when it became convinced of the impossibility of concluding a mutual assistance pact with Britain and France, and also a military convention, did the USSR decide to sign a non-aggression pact with Germany. In doing so, the Soviet Union avoided the trap into which the Munich policy-makers had hoped to lure it, and skilfully used the contradictions in the imperialist camp to preserve peace and strengthen its defence capacity. But it cannot be said that the men of Munich did not inflict any damage on the USSR. The Soviet government would have preferred collective security based on cooperation between the USSR, Britain and France against nazi aggression. Such cooperation, even if it had not prevented war, would have made it possible to fight in a more favourable strategic situation and would have forced Germany to fight on two fronts, in the West and the East. Anglo-French-Soviet military cooperation could have helped to prevent the fall of Poland and France, the seizure of which added to Germany's strength.

It was the fault of the Western powers that events in 1939 did not tend towards collective security. But neither did they take the course desired by the men of Munich, the course of war by the imperialist states against the Soviet Union. The nazis decided that it would be easier to fight Britain, France and Poland than to fight the USSR. So it was against them that war was unleashed. War thus broke out within the capitalist world, between two antagonistic groups of imperialist powers.

CHAPTER XII

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE INITIAL PERIOD OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

(September 1939-June 1941)

Outbreak of the Second World War

Nazi Germany attacked Poland on September 1, 1939.

Hitler's decision was taken with an eye to the following circumstances. The nazi aggression in Europe, Asia and Africa on the eve of the Second World War had substantially weakened the positions of Britain and France. At the same time both the strategic positions and the military industrial potential of Germany and its partners had been strengthened. For this reason and also considering the relative strengths of the USSR and the Western powers, the nazis decided that it would be safer for them to start the war for world domination by defeating the group of capitalist countries that was competing with Germany instead of attacking the Soviet Union. Thus the criminal policy of the Munich "appeasers" of Hitler turned against the Western powers themselves.

As soon as Germany attacked Poland the British government, which had guaranteed Polish independence, demanded that Germany should stop the war. Britain's example was followed by France. However the note that the British Ambassador presented to the German Foreign Ministry indicated that it was more of a "warning" than an ultimatum. While making their demand the British and French governments still did not abandon the hope of a peaceful settlement. They asked Mussolini to act as mediator, a role he had already played during the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. Once again Chamberlain and Daladier, the initiators of the Munich deal, counted on coming to terms with Hitler by making concessions at the expense of other countries.

But nazi Germany was not interested in new agreements, even if they offered the prospect of definite territorial gains. The German imperialists did not want to share the world with anyone. They intended to rule it, leaving only Eastern Asia and the Pacific Ocean to Japan.

The signing of the Soviet-German treaty marked the failure of the calculations made by the Munich circles for a Soviet-German war, the weakening of Germany by means of the USSR (and vice versa), while maintaining the British and French position of the "happy onlooker". But even now the men of Munich did not abandon their attempts to collude with Hitler and guide nazi aggression against the USSR.

It took Britain and France several days to realise that Hitler had no desire for a fresh deal. When this became obvious, they had no alter-

native but to declare war on Germany, which they did on September 3, 1939. The British and French governments were compelled to take this step. Failure to meet their publicly made commitments to Poland would have shattered their prestige in the eyes of the peoples of the world and undermined their positions as great powers. In any case they could not avoid war with Germany.

In the wake of Britain and France the British dominions declared war on Germany. Thus the local wars begun by the fascist states in various parts of the world turned into a world war. At first it was a conflict between two groups of imperialist powers. The Munichites' attempt to resolve the contradictions of imperialism at the expense of the USSR by starting a war between the capitalist and socialist systems had failed. War broke out in the capitalist world owing to the extreme aggravation of imperialist contradictions. It was the result of the fascist powers' encroachments on the national existence of a number of countries and on the great power positions of Britain and France (and subsequently the USA), and on their colonies.

Unlike the 1914-1918 war, the Second World War began in a situation dominated by the existence of two social systems, capitalist and socialist, the latter being represented by the Soviet Union. This was the decisive factor in the development of the Second World War and the change that was to come about in its character.

In its first stages the war was essentially a struggle between the two capitalist coalitions. The states of the fascist bloc went to war to conquer the world and set up a "new order", an order in which all nations would be colonially dependent on the fascist powers, deprived of elementary democratic rights, independence and sovereignty. Ferocious cruelty was the keynote of this behaviour, which involved the physical extermination of millions of people. Throughout the war they pursued aims of plunder.

The war that Britain and France waged against Germany was originally imperialist in character. Britain and France went to war to defend their imperialist positions and vast colonial possessions from the encroachments of German imperialism, to maintain their great power positions, which Hitler had already undermined and was threatening to destroy.

Nor had the British and French governments lost hope of turning the nazi aggression against the Soviet Union. Concerning these plans of the French government, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris Surits informed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in his letter of October 18, 1939: "Official circles and those close to the government ... still cherish the hope of inciting the USSR and Germany against each other."[1]

[1] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Soviet Ambassador in France to Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, October 18, 1939.

The Soviet Ambassador in London Maisky gave a similar assessment of the plans of the British Munichites in a letter to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in November 1939. As the Ambassador noted, these men could not part with the notion that "Britain and France could somehow be reconciled with Germany and in the end Hitler could in some way be steered eastward, against the Soviet Union".[2] This was the reason why, despite their declaration of war on Germany, Britain and France launched virtually no military operations against her and the war they had declared came to be known as the "phoney war".

The people's struggle against the aggressors in Poland and other countries that had become victims of fascist aggression was of an entirely different nature. It was a just war, for freedom and national independence. During the first stages of the general conflict, however, this liberation struggle was as yet weak and could not have any decisive effect on the character of the war as a whole.

Having declared war on Germany, Britain and France went no further. In practice they did nothing to ease the tragic position of the Polish army, and the British and French forces contented themselves with minor attacks on the Western Front in the area of Saarbrücken.

The absence of offensive action in the West was exploited by the nazi command to achieve the rapid defeat of Poland. British and French inaction allowed Hitler to throw his main forces against the Polish front with the result that 44 of the 52 operational infantry divisions, all the panzer and motorised divisions and nearly the whole air force were concentrated against Poland. The defence of the "Western Wall", from Aachen to Basle, was entrusted to 25 reserve divisions of the Landwehr, supported by a mere eight regular divisions, while the French army was fielding 90 divisions, 2,500 tanks and 10,000 guns.[3] At the Nuremberg trial the nazi generals Keitel and Jodl confirmed that a Franco-British offensive on the Western Front would have put Germany in an extremely difficult position.

The reason for the complete lack of offensive action on the Western Front during the German-Polish war was that the governments of Britain and France, although they had declared war on Hitler because he had left them with no other alternative, did not really want to fight nazi Germany. For the men of Munich Poland was a pawn which they lightheartedly sacrificed in the dirty game of steering the Wehrmacht up to the borders of the USSR and bringing it face to face with the Soviet Army. The concept on which their policy was based, that of inciting Hitler's Third Reich against the USSR, was still being realised, although by somewhat different means.

[2] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Soviet Ambassador in London to People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, November 23, 1939.

[3] A. Goutard, *1940. La guerre des occasions perdues*, Hachette, 1956, p. 114.

Having occupied the strongly fortified "Maginot line", Britain and France remained passive, while Hitler did his worst with Poland. It was as if the Western powers were saying to Hitler: "If Germany turns on the West, it will meet with the resistance of Britain, France and the USA. But if, when it is finished with Poland, it develops its aggression further eastward, then it will be in no danger from the Western powers."

Hitler lost no time in exploiting the opportunity afforded by the British and French governments for the lightning destruction of the Polish army and the annexation of Poland. The German army carved its way into Polish territory, sowing death and destruction. The German command combined rapid offensives by panzer and motorised formations that drove deep into the Polish positions with powerful air attacks. The Polish army was split up, encircled and annihilated. In the first two weeks of September 1939 Germany smashed bourgeois-landlord Poland, whose government and high command then abandoned their people and army to the will of fate and fled abroad.

Poland's catastrophic September was the price it had to pay for the anti-popular, anti-Soviet foreign policy that its reactionary rulers had pursued throughout the interwar period. The disaster was the direct result of the refusal of the assistance offered by the Soviet Union to Poland during the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations of spring and summer 1939. Despite the courage of its soldiers the Polish army, poorly equipped and abandoned by its leaders, could not put up any effective resistance to the overwhelmingly superior forces of the nazi aggressors. Many Polish units and Poland's civil population fought devotedly and died valiantly for their country's freedom and independence. For example, the ancient fortress of Modlin, which had been built long ago by the Russians, held out until October 2, 1939. It was defended by soldiers, workers, peasants and the best of the intellectuals. Warsaw was bravely defended by its garrison and a workers' brigade mustered by Communists and left-wing Socialists. But these heroes could not change the course of the war.

Measures Taken by the USSR to Secure Its Borders and Limit the Sphere of German Aggression (September 1939-June 1940)

The advance of the German armies towards the Western borders of the USSR threatened to weaken the country's defences. The Soviet government was therefore urgently faced with the necessity of stopping their onward drive. A barrier had to be created to block the Germans' eastward advance. The USSR could not allow the nazi armies to reach its border, which at that time ran

through the environs of Minsk.

The Soviet government also regarded it as its duty to prevent the fascist enslavement of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian populations that had been living within the Polish borders since 1920, when bourgeois-landlord Poland had annexed the Ukrainian and Byelorussian territory.

On September 17 in view of the fact that the Polish army had disintegrated under the blows of the German war machine the Red Army entered Western Byelorussia and Western Ukraine. The long-cherished dream of the Western Ukrainians and Byelorussians for reunification with the Soviet Ukraine and Byelorussia became a reality. In accord with the unanimously expressed will of the population the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia were reunited with the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics. In Moscow on September 28, 1939 a treaty was signed between the USSR and Germany establishing the Western border of the Soviet state approximately along the so-called "Curzon" line, which in 1919 Britain, France, the United States and other countries had proposed as the border between Soviet Russia and Poland based on ethnographical principles.

The German occupation of Poland further increased the danger that the Baltic states would be used by the aggressors as a springboard for an attack on the USSR. The rapid collapse of bourgeois Poland had clearly demonstrated that small countries on the Western borders of the Soviet Union were incapable of resisting nazi Germany with their own forces. This prompted the Soviet government to take immediate measures to safeguard peace in the Baltic area and ensure the safety of the Soviet Union's north-western borders, the approach to which lay through Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

In the autumn of 1939 in view of the major strategic importance of the Baltic area in the Soviet Union's defence system, the Soviet government offered the governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania pacts of mutual assistance. The conclusion of such pacts was essential not only from the standpoint of strengthening the security of the Soviet Union; it was also entirely in the interests of the peoples of the Baltic countries in that it offered them protection from nazi aggression.

As a result of the subsequent negotiations the Soviet Union concluded mutual assistance pacts with Estonia (September 28, 1939), Latvia (October 5) and Lithuania (October 10). Under the terms of these pacts the Soviet Union acquired the right to station a specified number of troops on the territory of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and to set up naval bases and airfields at certain points. The Soviet-Lithuanian treaty also provided for joint defence of the Lithuanian border. The treaties between the Soviet Union, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were based on the principles of equality, non-interference in

each other's internal affairs, and mutual respect for independence and sovereignty.

The conclusion of these pacts transformed the situation on the Baltic. The strategic positions of the Soviet Baltic fleet were strengthened and this helped to promote security throughout the Baltic Sea. Democratically minded people in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania welcomed the emerging rapprochement between these states and the Soviet Union.

The great mass of the people warmly approved these treaties with the USSR and in letters to their governments urged them to pursue a friendly policy towards the Soviet Union. "The workers of Estonia," one such letter stated, "welcome the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance between Estonia and the Soviet Union and hope that this will be followed by a further rapprochement of both peoples and countries. We believe that the pact will prevent the danger of aggression along the coast of Estonia and thus provide conditions for the peaceful development of the peoples of both Estonia and the Soviet Union."[4]

However, the governments of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania soon began to violate flagrantly their treaty obligations to the Soviet Union. They dragged out the negotiations for the entry of Soviet troops onto the territory of the Baltic countries, created delays in the assignment of sites and buildings for Soviet garrisons, and sabotaged the building of the military camps where they were to be stationed.

The Latvian government's position was extremely characteristic in this respect. On October 21, 1939 the Ambassador of the USSR reported that the Latvian delegation, when asked about the time limits for the entry of troops and the actual deployment of aircraft and tanks, refused to reply on the ground that it was not authorised to do so.[5] The Latvian government's hostility is shown by the instructions issued by the Latvian Ministry of the Interior on November 16, 1939, according to which all Latvians who consorted in any way with Soviet officers or soldiers were to be arrested.[6]

During the winter of 1939-1940 the activities of the anti-Soviet fascist cliques in the Baltic countries were stepped up in connection with the fact that Britain and France, despite the war with Germany, had begun to prepare for an attack on the USSR. Britain and France were eager to enlist the Baltic states in the "crusade" against the Soviet Union that they were organising. The Latvian envoy in France

[4] Quoted in: *The History of the Second World War. 1939-1945*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1974, p. 366 (in Russian).

[5] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of Soviet Ambassador in Latvia to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, October 21, 1939.

[6] Central State Historical Archives of Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (hereafter CSHA, Latvian SSR). Instruction of Ministry of the Interior, Latvia, November 16, 1939.

reported to Riga on October 12, 1939 that Mierry, who was at that time in charge of the second (intelligence) department of the French War Ministry, had "in strict confidence" explained to him the plans for the forthcoming operations of Anglo-French troops against the USSR and stressed that "the Baltic states, Finland and the Scandinavian countries should go into action at the same time".[7]

The Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the French Chamber of Deputies Mistler told the Latvian Envoy in Paris Groswald that the Baltic countries should be ready for combined operations against the USSR, and that for this purpose they should conclude joint military alliance. He added that "each state must make specific statements and undertake specific obligations as to how many divisions, how many aircraft and how many warships it will put at the disposal of the alliance".[8]

Assuming that this would mean a general war of the whole capitalist world against the USSR, the governments of the Baltic states actively prepared to participate in operations. While these preparations were being made, steps were taken to gear public opinion. The Soviet Ambassador in Riga reported to Moscow in December 1939 that "with the knowledge of the authorities and on their initiative the most absurd and hostile rumours about our Red Army are being circulated in Latvia", and that "an atmosphere of denigration and discontent" was being created by the Latvian authorities.[9] The Soviet garrisons had been put under strict surveillance.

The Baltic Entente stepped up its activities and developed into an anti-Soviet military alliance between Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Latvian-Estonian military alliance that had been concluded in 1923 was now joined by Lithuania. Admittedly the conclusion of a formal treaty bringing Lithuania into the Latvian-Estonian alliance was considered to be unacceptable. But a de facto anti-Soviet military alliance of the three countries was set up and functioned. Informing the War Ministry of the decisions taken at the conference of Foreign Ministers of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia held in Tallinn on December 7 and 8, 1939, the Latvian Ministry for Foreign Affairs pointed out that the treaty of alliance between Latvia and Estonia "remains in force and military cooperation between both states should continue". "Military cooperation with Lithuania," the letter continued, "should be kept up without a special treaty because the conclusion of such a

[7] CSHA, Latvian SSR. Report of Latvian Envoy in France to Latvian Foreign Ministry, October 12, 1939.

[8] CSHA, Latvian SSR. Statement of Chairman of Foreign Affairs Commission, Chamber of Deputies, Mistler to Latvian Envoy in Paris Groswald, October 1939.

[9] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of Soviet Ambassador in Latvia to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, December 1939.

treaty would be hard to explain and justify."[10]

Thus despite the fact that the treaties of mutual assistance between the USSR and the Baltic countries specifically stated that the contracting parties undertook not to conclude any alliances and not to participate in any coalitions directed against another contracting party, the Baltic states at the Tallinn conference concluded an anti-Soviet military alliance. The fact that this alliance was formulated not as a treaty but as a secret instruction of the conference of the Baltic Entente did not, of course, make any difference.

There were other facts testifying to the military collaboration of the Baltic states against the USSR, specifically the establishment of closer liaison between the staffs of their armies. On November 21 to 23, 1939 the chief of staff of the Latvian army General Rosenstein visited Estonia, and on November 30 and December 1, he was in Lithuania. On December 16 the chief of staff of the Lithuanian army General Rastikis was in Riga. On December 29 a conference of representatives of the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian armies took place in Riga. On January 24, 1940 the chief of staff of the Estonian army General Jakson arrived in Riga. In February Lithuania's Deputy War Minister General Reklaitis arrived in Tallinn, to be followed by Latvia's War Minister General Berkis, and so on.

Anti-Soviet activities were gaining ground in Lithuania despite the fact that the USSR, considering the national interests of the Lithuanian people, had restored to Lithuania its ancient capital of Vilnius and the Vilnius Region, liberated by the Red Army in September 1939.

As the Soviet embassy in Lithuania informed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, when the news of the conclusion of the mutual assistance pact with the USSR and of the return of Vilnius to Lithuania became known in Lithuania, the progressive intellectuals and workers held a friendly demonstration in front of the Soviet embassy. The demonstrators proclaimed slogans of welcome in honour of the Soviet Union. Many Lithuanians came to the embassy personally or telephoned to express their gratitude to the USSR.[11]

On the other hand, the reactionary circles in Lithuania did all they could to choke any expression of sympathy for the Soviet Union on the part of the Lithuanian people. The demonstration was fired upon on orders from the Lithuanian authorities.[12] As it later became known, even then the Lithuanian government had begun to put out feelers about the possibility of a deal with nazi Germany. The director

[10] CSHA, Latvian SSR. Letter of Latvian Foreign Ministry to Latvian War Ministry, January 5, 1940.

[11] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of Soviet Ambassador in Lithuania to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, October 14, 1939.

[12] Ibid.

of the State Security Department of Lithuania A. Povilaitis, on the personal instructions of President Smetona, visited Germany for this purpose in February 1940. Povilaitis had the task of "informing the ruling circles of Germany that President Smetona had decided on a reorientation towards Germany". Specifically, he was to investigate "whether Germany would agree to accept Lithuania as a protectorate". Povilaitis conducted negotiations with Himmler's deputy, who stated that "Lithuania could possibly be made a protectorate of Germany before September 1940 and in any case not later than the end of the war in the West".

On returning from Berlin, Povilaitis reported the results of his negotiations to Smetona. The president instructed his assistant "from now on to change the existing attitude to Germans for the better, to give them all necessary assistance if it should be needed in any way from the Lithuanian state".[13]

By the summer of 1940 the situation in the Baltic countries had become critical. Having won quick victories in the West, the nazis had once again turned their gaze to the East. The fascist rulers of the Baltic countries knew that Hitler was vitally interested in dominating the Baltic littoral, which could be used as a springboard for attack on the USSR.

Such plans with regard to the Baltic countries were no secret in Germany. The Latvian envoy in Berlin Krievin in his messages of May 27 and 29, 1940 reported that a map of the so-called New Europe was being widely circulated in Germany. It showed the Baltic states as part of the nazi Reich.[14] On June 12, 1940 Krievin reported to Riga that there was considerable talk in Berlin that after victory in the West Hitler would attack the Soviet Union. If one spoke with representatives of the German ruling circles about Soviet-German relations on an official basis, Krievin wrote, one usually received a non-committal answer. "But on the personal plane and at a later hour in the evening the same people declare that a settling of accounts with Russia is inevitable. Without any exaggeration I can say," Krievin added, "that in the last few weeks I have not met a single German who stated anything to the contrary."[15] A further testimony to the seriousness of the situation at the time is provided by the confessions of Hitler's General Jodl at the Nuremberg trial. He stated that while the campaign in the West was still in progress Hitler informed him of his intention to attack the USSR.[16] At one point the attack on the USSR

[13] *Kommunist* (magazine of CC CP, Lithuania), No. 6, 1960, pp. 36-37.

[14] CSHA, Latvian SSR. Reports of Latvian Envoy in Berlin Krievin, May 27 and 29, 1940.

[15] Ibid. Report of Latvian Envoy in Berlin Krievin, June 12, 1940.

[16] *The Nuremberg Trial of the Major German War Criminals*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1957, p. 473 (in Russian).

was to be launched in the autumn of 1940.[17] The Barbarossa Plan was approved later.

In such circumstances the fascist ruling cliques in the Baltic countries became even more open in taking the road of collaboration with the nazis. At the same time they flagrantly violated the treaties of mutual assistance with the USSR. The Lithuanian government even helped nazi Germany to ferry spies into the USSR.[18] As can be seen from the report of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of May 30, 1940 the unbridled anti-Soviet activity of the authorities in the Baltic states reached the point of organising kidnappings of Soviet military personnel, who were tortured or even murdered. Provocatory military manoeuvres were carried out close to Soviet military installations and areas where Soviet troops were stationed.[19]

The anti-Soviet intrigues in the Baltic states constituted a serious danger to the peoples of these countries. These nations were about to be betrayed by their reactionary governments to the nazi regime and dragged into imperialist adventures that would prove disastrous for the Baltic states. In view of this threat a broad anti-fascist Popular Front took shape in all three Baltic states by June 1940. The basic slogans rallying the masses of these countries were, first, the overthrow of the fascist governments and establishing of a democratic order and, second, defence of the Baltic countries in collaboration with the USSR against German aggression. The fascist ruling cliques led by Smetona of Lithuania, by Ulmanis of Latvia, and by Piats of Estonia, had finally lost the confidence of the people. The Latvian envoy in Lithuania reporting on the numerous anti-governmental demonstrations in the country, told Riga of "the president's difficult position and the decline if not complete collapse of his authority. He is holding on only thanks to the police and the army".[20]

A similar situation had developed in Latvia and Estonia. In November 1939 the head of the Latvian security service was compelled to admit in his report to the Ministry of the Interior that "Communist influence at all factories and enterprises in Riga, Daugavpils, Liepaja and Ventspils has considerably increased and continues to grow. The workers believe in the Communist Party and are ridiculing and making fun ... of the president."[21] The situation in Latvia became even more

[17] Ibid., Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 483.

[18] *Kommunist* (magazine of CC CP, Lithuania), No. 6, 1960, p. 37.

[19] *Izvestia*, May 30, 1940.

[20] CSHA, Latvian SSR. Report of Latvian Envoy in Lithuania to Latvian Foreign Ministry, June 1940. "In view of this," the report went on, "one must reckon with the fact that in sheer despair Smetona may take the step of subordinating Lithuania completely to Germany." "As far as I know the president," the Latvian envoy wrote, "he is far more concerned about staying in power than about the fate of Lithuania."

[21] *Istoriya SSSR*, No. 1, 1963, p. 63.

critical in the summer of 1940. The Latvian security service stated on June 1 that "on the whole the workers are dissatisfied. They have acquired a great dislike and hostility towards the existing regime in Latvia.... In May the mood of the workers further deteriorated."[22] In Estonia the campaign was launched for signatures to a petition to the government, which condemned the fascist system and demanded democratic freedoms, measures against unemployment, etc.[23]

By June 1940 a revolutionary situation had matured in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.[24] Only a spark was needed to bring the masses into action.

Every day the Soviet government became more and more convinced that the fascist ruling cliques in the Baltic countries did not intend to fulfil their obligations under the treaties of mutual assistance with the USSR and were prepared to allow German troops into Baltic territory.

In the middle of June 1940 the Soviet government publicly exposed these intentions of the rulers of the Baltic countries. The result was a big upswing in popular activity. In Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia meetings and demonstrations were held attracting thousands of people and demanding democratic reforms and close cooperation with the USSR in ensuring the security of the Baltic littoral. In this situation the Soviet government confronted the governments of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia with the question of removing from government posts individuals who had become imperialist agents, and of forming governments that were capable of honestly putting the mutual assistance treaties into effect and ready to do so. At the same time the USSR demanded agreement to a strengthening of its garrisons stationed in the Baltic countries, which were now undermanned in view of the vastly increased danger from Germany after the capitulation of France.

The growing pressure of the masses forced the governments of the Baltic states to agree to these measures. For example, Ulmanis, while remaining President of Latvia, chose professor A. Kirchenstein, a progressive public figure, to head the government. Changes were also made in the composition of the Lithuanian and Estonian governments.

On July 14 and 15, 1940 democratic elections were held in the Baltic countries and the majority of votes went to candidates with the working people's interests at heart.

The newly elected Seims (parliaments), which now expressed the

[22] CSHA, Latvian SSR. Report of Latvian Security Service to Government of Latvia, June 1, 1940.

[23] *History of Estonian SSR*, Second ed., Tallinn, 1958, p. 587 (in Russian).

[24] *History of Latvian SSR*, Vol. III, Riga, 1958, pp. 463-84; *History of Estonian SSR*, Tallinn, 1958, pp. 589-99 (in Russian).

long-cherished wishes of the people of the Baltic countries, proclaimed the restoration of Soviet power. The Seims appealed to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to accept the Baltic countries into the family of the peoples of the Soviet Union. This request was granted at the 7th session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on August 3 to 5, 1940. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania once again became Soviet republics with all the equal rights that they had possessed in 1918-1919, before Soviet power there was liquidated by the Entente with the help of German troops and Russian whiteguards.

A dangerous situation for the USSR was created by the position of Finland. Soon after the outbreak of war in Europe the Soviet government had to face the fact that a number of imperialist powers wanted to turn Finland into a springboard for war against the USSR.

The Finnish reactionary circles which held the reins of power at the time were trying to maintain contact with the nazis. Germany was supplying Finland with arms. For a time the Soviet-German treaty kept Germany's activities in Finland in check, but Finland's reactionary rulers were ready at the first opportunity to offer their territory and their armed forces to Germany's enemies, the imperialists of Britain and France, as long as they started a war against the USSR, the country of socialism. On the pretext that it had to defend its "neutrality" Finland began to strengthen its borders and build up its army, and by the end of 1938 on the pretext of ensuring "the security of neutralised territory" tried to militarise the Aland Islands in defiance of existing treaties. The extreme reactionaries started a campaign for the building of a "great Finland" at the expense of substantial stretches of Soviet territory.

At that time the Soviet-Finnish border passed within 32 kilometres of Leningrad and the Gulf of Finland was open to an enemy fleet. These circumstances created great difficulties for the defence of Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, a huge industrial and cultural centre, and the cradle of the October Revolution. In view of the generally aggravated international situation this was bound to cause anxiety to the Soviet government. "If we try today," President of Finland Kekkonen said in his speech on September 25, 1964, "after two decades to put ourselves in the position of the Soviet Union, we can in the light of Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in 1941 understand how great was the anxiety that the Soviet Union felt and was bound to feel about its security at the end of the 1930s."[25]

In order to ensure the security of Leningrad and its north-western border the Soviet government had already in April 1938 proposed unofficially to the government of Finland that they should begin talks on the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact.

[25] U. K. Kekkonen, *Friendship and Goodneighbourliness. Speeches, 1963 to 1967*, Moscow, 1968, p. 36 (in Russian).

The Finnish government, however, had rejected this proposal. At the same time it continued to urge the militarisation of the Aland Islands and even appealed to the USSR for support in obtaining abrogation of the Convention of 1921 providing for their demilitarisation. When the Soviet government inquired about the character and size of the proposed arming of the Aland Islands, the Finnish government refused to give an answer. In March 1939 the USSR requested Finland to lease to the Soviet Union the islands of Suursaari (Hogland), Lavansaari, Seyskaari (Seskar) and Tyurinsaari situated in the Gulf of Finland so as to provide somewhat better security for the sea approaches to Leningrad. Again the Finnish government refused. In April 1939 negotiations on this question were broken off in view of Finland's negative position.

With the outbreak of war in Europe Finland could easily become a springboard for aggressors from one or the other imperialist camp. On October 5, 1939 the Soviet government asked Finland to send a delegation to Moscow for negotiations concerning Soviet-Finnish relations in connection with the war in Europe. On October 11, 1939 these negotiations began in Moscow. The Soviet government proposed a Soviet-Finnish mutual assistance pact. But the proposal was rejected by the Finnish delegation. "The government of Finland," its answer stated, "which had in advance discussed the possibility of such an initiative in Moscow, did not authorise the delegation to conduct negotiations on this point."[26] After this, on October 14, the USSR asked Finland to lease the port of Hanko to the Soviet Union for 30 years and cede to it the islands of Hogland, Seskar, Lavansaari, Tyurinsaari, Bierke and part of the Karelian Isthmus that were required for ensuring the minimal security of Leningrad, and also part of the Rybachy and Sredny peninsulas, altogether an area of 2,761 sq km in exchange for 5,523 sq km of Soviet territory in the area of Rebbola and Poros Lake. The Soviet Union thus offered Finland twice the amount of territory it was asking for.

J. K. Paasikivi, a future Prime Minister and later President of Finland, one of her most distinguished statesmen, described the Soviet proposals as "restrained and moderate", and thought that "they should be accepted".

But encouraged in its anti-Soviet policy by the imperialist circles of Britain, France and the United States, the Finnish government not only rejected the Soviet proposals and broke off discussions, but also began active preparations for war against the Soviet Union.

Finnish troops were concentrated on the Karelian Isthmus at the approaches to Leningrad. The Finnish government and the military started organising dangerous armed provocations on the Soviet-Finnish border. In this they counted on the support of Britain and

[26] *Helsingin Sanomat*, April 5, 1973.

France, knowing that the ruling circles of these countries dreamed of turning the war against Germany into a war against the USSR in alliance with nazism.

On November 28, 1939, in view of the armed provocations on the Soviet-Finnish border, the border violations by Finnish armed forces and the artillery bombardment of Soviet territory, the Soviet government told the government of Finland that it had denounced the non-aggression treaty. On November 29, the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with Finland. However, the armed provocations continued with the result that on November 30, 1939 hostilities broke out between Finland and the USSR.

The governments of Britain and France instead of fighting German imperialism made use of the Soviet-Finnish war to rush through preparations for an expeditionary force to be sent to Finland for operations against the USSR.

Britain and France succeeded in having the USSR expelled from the League of Nations although this action was a violation of its Charter.

Describing the Anglo-French plan for making war on the USSR, the British historian A.J.P. Taylor writes that "The motives for the projected expedition to Finland defy rational analysis. For Great Britain and France to provoke war with Soviet Russia when already at war with Germany seems the product of a madhouse, and it is tempting to suggest a more sinister plan: switching the war on to an anti-Bolshevik course, so that the war against Germany could be forgotten or even ended."[27]

The government of the United States was entirely in agreement with this Anglo-French policy of provoking war against the USSR. The "moral embargo" that it imposed on trade with the Soviet Union was a striking demonstration of such solidarity. In the USA, Britain and France a violent anti-Soviet campaign was launched. Soviet property in a number of Western countries was illegally impounded. All this was designed to create a favourable situation for transforming the war with Germany into a war against the USSR. And in their preparations for it Britain and France showed far more energy than in conducting hostilities against Germany. According to a statement by Chamberlain, Britain sent to Finland 101 aircraft, 214 guns, 185,000 shells, 50,000 hand grenades, 15,700 bombs, 10,000 anti-tank mines and other military supplies. France also dispatched large quantities of weapons and military equipment to Finland. An Anglo-French expeditionary corps of 150,000 men was alerted for dispatch to Finland. The governments of Britain and France exerted pressure on Sweden and Norway to gain their permission for the passage of these troops through their territory. The French General Staff, in addition to its

[27] A. J. P. Taylor, *English History. 1914-1945*, Oxford, 1965, p. 469.

plans for intervention in the Soviet-Finnish war, worked out a detailed plan for attacking the USSR from the south, in the Transcaucasian area and the Black Sea coast, the bombing of Baku and its oil fields being considered the most effective operation. The so-called "southern plan" involved bringing the Balkan states and Turkey into action against the USSR. These treacherous plans were torpedoed by the Red Army's piercing of the Mannerheim line. With the routing of the main forces of the Finnish army on the Karelian Isthmus and the eastern sector of the front, the Finnish government was forced to reconsider the Soviet peace proposals.

Admittedly, the Ryti government had recognised the inevitability of defeat at the end of December 1939, but had kept up resistance in the hope of rapid Anglo-French intervention. As can be seen from the minutes of the conversation between the Finnish Prime Minister and the American envoy in Helsinki on January 4, 1940, the Finnish government appealed at the time to the United States and a number of other countries to mediate in bilateral negotiations "to terminate present hostilities between Finland and Russia ... even if it led to no immediate cessation of hostilities."[28] The Prime Minister left it to the government of the USA to choose the right moment. For nearly a whole month the US government waited. Only at the end of January 1940 did the State Department instruct its Ambassador in Moscow to offer the Soviet government American services in seeking ways "to settle their differences without further bloodshed"; it is noteworthy that the Ambassador was instructed to present this step as an exclusively American initiative.[29]

Only on February 2 was the Finnish proposal conveyed to the government of the USSR. The Soviet government did no more than listen to this message inasmuch as it had already taken steps to establish diplomatic contacts with the government of Finland. On February 5 the Finnish Prime Minister informed the American envoy that the Soviet Union was putting out feelers through Sweden about establishing contacts with the Finnish government.[30]

It is a fact that the Soviet government did at the time send an unofficial message through the Swedish government stating its readiness to consider proposals from the government of Finland. However, Finland did not react to this peaceful gesture, because it was still counting on military assistance from Britain and France and on Sweden's consent to allow foreign troops to pass through onto Finnish territory. In a conversation with the US envoy Finland's envoy in Sweden frankly acknowledged that his government had rejected the

[28] *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers. 1940*, Vol. I, General, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1959, p. 271.

[29] Ibid., p. 281.

[30] Ibid., p. 287.

Soviet terms in the hope that there was a possibility "of obtaining effective help from Sweden and later from the Allies".[31]

On February 28 the Soviet government repeated its peace proposals to Finland, using Sweden as a go-between. By this time a radical change had come about in the political and military situation. Finland had lost hope of further Anglo-French support in view of the Swedish government's firm refusal to sacrifice its neutrality and was obliged to accept the Soviet proposal for peace talks in Moscow, which began on March 8. These negotiations culminated on March 12, 1940 in the signing of a Soviet-Finnish peace treaty.

Having defeated the Finnish army, the Soviet Union had every opportunity of occupying the whole of Finland. However, in concluding the peace treaty the Soviet government confined itself to the minimal demands required for ensuring the security of the Soviet Union's north-western borders and particularly Leningrad.

Under the Moscow peace treaty the USSR received the Karelian Isthmus including Vyborg, Vyborg Bay with its islands, the western and northern shores of Lake Ladoga, several islands in the Gulf of Finland, the territory east of Merikarvia and the town of Kuolajarvi in the North Karelia, part of the Rybachy and Sredny peninsulas on the coast of the Arctic Ocean. The USSR was also able to lease for 30 years the Hanko peninsula and the adjoining islands for a naval base, which was to cover the entrance to the Gulf of Finland. The Soviet Union undertook to withdraw its troops from the Petsamo (Pechenga) region, a native Russian territory which Soviet Russia had voluntarily ceded to Finland in 1920.

The peace treaty with Finland helped in some measure to strengthen the defences of the USSR against nazi aggression. The Soviet Union acquired territory that was of vital importance for the safety of the Soviet northwest, particularly Leningrad, and to some extent Murmansk and the Murmansk railway. "Both contracting sides," the treaty stated, "undertake to refrain from any attack on each other and from concluding any alliance or taking part in any coalition directed against one of the contracting sides."[32] This undertaking was soon violated by Finland, which allied itself with nazi Germany and in 1941 joined Germany in attacking the USSR.

On October 11, 1940 an agreement on the Aland Islands was signed between the USSR and Finland. In content this agreement differs little from the international convention on the Aland Islands of 1921 in that, like this convention, it obligated Finland to demilitarise the islands. On the other hand, the agreement of October 11, 1940 allowed the Soviet Union for the first time to have a consulate on the

[31] Ibid., pp. 298-99.

[32] *Izvestia*, March 14, 1940; *Foreign Policy of the USSR*, Vol. IV, pp. 494-96.

islands. Besides the usual consulate functions, Article 3 of the agreement stipulated the right to check up on the execution of Finland's commitment to demilitarise the islands.[33]

At the end of June 1940 the Soviet government succeeded in reaching a peaceful solution to the problem of recovering Bessarabia, which had been forcibly detached from Soviet Russia in 1918 by the bourgeois-landlord Romanian monarchy with the support of the Entente imperialists. Ever since the October Revolution the policy of the Western powers had been designed to turn Romania into a forepost for action against Soviet Russia. Under the influence of the Western powers Romania's ruling circles, despite repeated offers from the Soviet government, rejected any peaceful solution to the problem. On June 26, 1940 the Soviet government again demanded the return of Bessarabia and the handing over Northern Bukovina, where the majority of the population was Ukrainian, to the USSR.

This time the Romanian monarchist government accepted the Soviet Union's demand. The nazis were still not ready to attack the USSR and advised not to allow matters to reach the point of war. In accordance with the agreement of June 28, 1940 the Red Army launched its mission of peaceful liberation in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. By June 30 Soviet troops in Bessarabia reached the ancient legitimate border between the USSR and Romania—the river Prut.

Liberated Bessarabia rejoined Soviet Moldavia, which was proclaimed the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic on August 2, 1940.

Emphasising the importance of this event, Leonid Brezhnev has said: "The restoration in 1940 of Soviet power in Bessarabia and its reunification with the Moldavian ASSR was an act of historic justice."[34] Thanks to the reunification of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian lands and the return of the Baltic countries and Bessarabia to the USSR the Soviet Union was able to move considerably further to the West its defence lines designed to repulse the approaching German aggression. The Soviet government thus completed preparations for the creation of an Eastern Front against nazi Germany, which played an extremely important role in the further development of events. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, it was forced to launch the war from far less favourable strategic lines that were much further removed from the vital centres of the USSR than the old state frontier that had existed up to 1939-1940.

The significance of the advance of the starting lines for the strategic deployment of the Red Army in the West would have been even greater if the Soviet Union had had time enough to prepare its defences properly in the purely military sense. But even so, the moving of the frontiers to the West reduced the negative effects of the sudden attack

[33] Ibid., pp. 528-30.

[34] L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Moscow, 1975, p. 503.

on the USSR. No matter how grave the situation created by nazi Germany's onslaught of June 22, 1941, it would have been even more serious if the Germans have begun their advance on Moscow not from Brest, Suvalki and Grodno, but from Minsk, or if they had made their thrust at Leningrad not from East Prussia, but from Narva, not from a line west of Vyborg but from Sestroretsk. On October 1, 1939 Churchill, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, made a radio speech in which he correctly assessed the policy of the Soviet government. Specifically, he stated: "That the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate, the line is there, and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail."[35]

Strengthening the southern borders of the USSR depended in large measure on the position of Turkey since the latter had a land frontier with the USSR in the Transcaucasus and controlled the straits joining the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Turkey had been assigned an important place in the plans of both the Anglo-French bloc and of nazi Germany. Both imperialist coalitions attached enormous importance to Turkey's strategic position and her geographical proximity to the Soviet Union. Turkey's ruling circles were balancing between the two belligerent groups, and at first inclined towards the Anglo-French bloc. In order to bar the road to nazi aggression in the Middle East the Soviet government sent Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. P. Potemkin to Ankara with a proposal for a Soviet-Turkish pact of mutual assistance in the framework of the general front against nazi aggression. However, the Turkish ruling circles, following the Anglo-Franco-American policy of sabotaging agreements with the USSR, gave no definite answer to the Soviet proposals. If a mutual assistance treaty had been signed between the Soviet Union, Britain and France in the summer of 1939, it is possible that Turkey would also have joined the treaty, but no such treaty emerged.

On September 25, 1939 the Turkish Foreign Minister Sarajoglu arrived in Moscow and offered the USSR a mutual assistance pact with regard to the straits and the Balkans. The USSR agreed to conduct negotiations. But it soon transpired that the Turkish government was simultaneously conducting negotiations for a mutual assistance pact with Britain and France. This meant that if the Soviet Union concluded the pact that Turkey had offered it, it might easily be drawn into war with Italy and Germany with no promise of assistance from Britain and France and in the face of an extremely hostile attitude to the Land of Soviets on their part. Thus the Sarajoglu proposal amounted to an attempt to draw the USSR into an unequal military alliance with the Anglo-French bloc, to torpedo the

[35] W. S. Churchill, *Blood, Sweat and Tears*, New York, 1941, p. 173.

Soviet-German treaty and to provoke an armed conflict between the USSR and Italy and Germany.

On such terms it was of course impossible for the Soviet government to conclude a pact. It therefore proposed to Turkey that the 1925 Treaty of Neutrality should be reaffirmed. Sarajoglu rejected this proposal. As further events showed, the Turkish government was at the time interested not in improving relations with the USSR but in a rapprochement with Britain and France, whose governments were pursuing a hostile policy towards the Soviet Union. The result of this policy was the signing in Ankara on October 19, 1939 of the Anglo-Franco-Turkish treaty of mutual assistance.

Besides strengthening its frontiers and defence capacity, the Soviet government in the initial period of the Second World War had another important task of foreign policy. This task was to prevent the spread of fascist aggression to other countries and to give as much help as possible to the peoples in the struggle for preservation of their national independence. In 1939 to 1940 the Soviet Union repeatedly acted in defence of the freedom and independence of a number of European countries that were threatened with aggression by nazi Germany. In the spring of 1940 the Soviet Union took steps to prevent a German attack on Sweden. On April 13 the Soviet government told the German government through its Ambassador in Moscow that it was "definitely interested in preserving the neutrality of Sweden" and, "expresses the wish that Swedish neutrality should not be violated".[36] Germany was compelled to reckon with the firm stand taken by the Soviet government and to refrain from invading Sweden.

The Soviet government continued to make known its interest in preserving Swedish neutrality. The position of the USSR was met with great appreciation on the part of the people of Sweden and the Swedish government, which expressed to the Soviet government its "deepest gratitude for the understanding of the Swedish position in maintaining a neutral line that the Soviet Union had shown". In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador in May 1940 the Swedish Prime Minister stated that "friendship with the Soviet Union is Sweden's main bulwark".[37]

The Defeat of France

At the beginning of 1940 the Western powers were still seeking new ways of making a deal with Hitler and turning the front against the USSR. Through February to March 1940 the US Assistant Secre-

[36] *International Affairs*, Moscow, No. 9, 1959, p. 67.

[37] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of Soviet Ambassador in Sweden to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, May 9, 1940.

tary of State Welles was in Europe. Among other capitals he visited Berlin. The aim of his mission was to sound out the possibilities for a peace between Britain and France, on the one hand, and Hitler Germany, on the other. The mission achieved no success because the nazis were not prepared to make a deal. They had no intention of restraining their appetite and were hungry for fresh victims.

The fascist aggressors—Germany and Italy—had decided to exploit the favourable situation created by the "phoney war" conducted by the British and French governments. The short-sighted strategy of these governments allowed Germany and Italy to prepare unhindered for attacks on other European countries. At the beginning of April 1940 nazi troops invaded Denmark and occupied it without encountering resistance. They also landed on the coast of Norway. The resistance of the Norwegian patriots could not prevent the rapid occupation of the country by Hitler's armies. The intervention of the Soviet Union helped to save Sweden from attack.

The "phoney war" was brought to an end on May 10, 1940. On that day the German armed forces launched a full-scale offensive against France, covering a broad front through Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg and outflanking France's heavily fortified Maginot line. Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg were overrun by the nazi armies in a few days. The British expeditionary force was pressed back to the coast in the region of Dunkirk and was evacuated to Britain with the loss of all its heavy equipment. The armed forces of nazi Germany poured through the Belgian and Luxemburg frontiers into France.

It would have been possible for France to offer effective resistance to the German invasion. She had a large army that was satisfactorily armed and equipped. But the French command acted with extreme incompetence and adopted outmoded operational methods. It allowed the Germans to take it by surprise with a sudden and overwhelming attack. The French ruling circles had neither the ability nor the desire to take the necessary measures to rally and mobilise the French people for resistance to the nazi aggressors.

Up to the summer of 1940 Italy took no direct part in the Second World War. But when the Mussolini government saw that France had been crushed by the Germans and was no longer a serious adversary, Mussolini entered the war. On June 10 fascist Italy attacked an already defeated France. The Italian offensive against the south-eastern districts of France had no success, but Italy's move made the grave general military situation of France and Britain even worse.

At this tragic hour in French history the feuds and treachery among its ruling circles brought a government of capitulationist pro-fascists led by Marshal Petain to power. This government appealed to Hitler for the cessation of the military operations.

On June 22, 1940 the Petain government signed the shameful act of surrender. Hitler divided France into two zones. The whole of

Northern France, including Paris, the Channel and Atlantic coasts was occupied by the German army. The unoccupied zone remained under the jurisdiction of the Petain government with its centre in the famous resort of Vichy, whence it collaborated with Hitler and supplied nazi Germany not only with food and raw materials but also with French labour. On June 24, 1940 after the surrender to Germany the French government signed an armistice with Italy.

The Italian aggression was not confined to the territory of France. In July 1940 Italian fascist troops marched from Ethiopia in an attack on East Africa and seized British Somalia. In October of the same year Italy attacked Greece. Here it encountered stubborn and heroic resistance by the army and the people.

Soviet Efforts to Prevent the Spread of Nazi Aggression in the Second Half of 1940 and the Beginning of 1941

The Soviet government tried to block the spread of German aggression wherever there was any real opportunity of doing so. In an effort to shield the countries of the Balkan peninsula from nazi Germany it repeatedly warned Germany that the Soviet Union could not remain indifferent to events in this region of the European continent because German expansion in Romania, Bulgaria and other Balkan countries and also in Turkey was a serious threat to the security of the USSR. The Soviet government made a similar warning to Germany in connection with the subsequent shipping of German troops into Finland. At the end of 1940 and the beginning of 1941 the Soviet government took steps to prevent the seizure of the Balkans by fascist aggressors and the inclusion of Finland in the fascist bloc. Specifically, it gave the government of nazi Germany several firm warnings in which it emphasised Soviet interest in maintaining the independence of the Balkan states. Unfortunately, it proved impossible to achieve in the Balkans the positive result that was attained with regard to Sweden. The main reason for this was the increased power of nazi Germany thanks to its victory over France. But the positions adopted by the rulers of Bulgaria and Romania also had an effect. They had gone too far in their collaboration with nazi Germany.

The victory over France made Germany's nazi rulers complete masters of nearly all the resources of the European continent excluding the Soviet Union. The next move was to prepare for an attack on the USSR. Massive steps were taken to build up the armed forces. The German armies were gradually moved into position along the borders of the USSR. In the midst of this intricate international situation, on June 25, 1940, diplomatic relations were established between the USSR and Yugoslavia.

Meanwhile the fascist aggressors were coordinating their actions. On September 27, 1940 Germany, Italy and Japan signed a Tripartite Pact, dividing the world into spheres of influence.[38] According to this treaty, Europe was to be dominated by Germany and Italy, while the "greater East Asia" became the domain of Japan.

The three powers undertook to assist one another with all political, economic and military means if one of them was attacked by "a power at present not involved in the European war or in the Sino-Japanese conflict". This could only mean two great powers, the United States and the USSR. And it was against them that the treaty was aimed. But with regard to the USSR the aim of the new aggressive pact was masked by the insertion of an article (No. 5), in which the sides declared that it by no means "affects the political status which exists at present as between each of the three Contracting Parties and Soviet Russia".

After the signing of the Tripartite Pact the German government made a cunning proposal to the Soviet government that together with Germany, Italy and Japan it should take part in a "demarcation of their interests". The German government invited Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars V. M. Molotov to visit Berlin for negotiations.

The invitation was accepted. Soviet-German relations were becoming increasingly complex and there was an urgent need to clarify the further intentions of Hitler and his clique, which exercised unlimited power over German policy and its huge armed forces. The USSR had been put on its guard by the appearance of German troops in Finland and Romania—on both strategic flanks of the potential German-Soviet front. There was also reason for alarm in the conclusion of the Berlin treaty between the three aggressors.

During the Soviet-German negotiations held in Berlin from November 12 and 13, 1940, the German government tried to obtain the Soviet government's agreement to the programme of annexations planned by the three aggressors in the Berlin pact. The USSR was invited to join the Berlin treaty. The Soviet government did not yield to this provocation.

In a memorandum on the results of these negotiations sent to the Soviet Ambassador in London on November 17, 1940 the People's Commissar wrote: "It has emerged from the talks that the Germans want to take over Turkey under the pretext of guaranteeing her security in the manner of Romaina. They want to tempt us with a promise of revision of the Montreux Convention in our favour, and are offering us their help in this respect. We did not agree to this because we consider that, first, Turkey should remain independent

[38] *Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. XI, pp. 204-05.

and, secondly, the regime in the straits can be improved through negotiations between us and Turkey, but not behind her back. The Germans and the Japanese, it would seem, are very anxious to push us in the direction of the Persian Gulf and India. We declined to discuss this question because we regard such advice from Germany as inappropriate."[39]

Subsequently, in a conversation with the Turkish Ambassador in Berlin on March 17, 1941 Hitler admitted the aim he had pursued during the Berlin negotiations in November 1940 with the head of the Soviet government. "On that occasion," Hitler said, "Germany had exerted herself to draw Russia into the great combination against England."[40] During the Berlin negotiations the Soviet government firmly rejected the programme of annexations proposed by Hitler. German diplomacy also failed to draw the USSR into the system of the Berlin treaty. The negotiations gave the Soviet government the chance of making the necessary soundings and also expressing its negative attitude to nazi Germany's schemes in the Balkans, in Finland and in other areas.[41]

The course of the negotiations finally convinced Hitler that the Soviet Union was the main obstacle in the way of nazi Germany's march towards world domination.

For its part, the Soviet government demanded the withdrawal of German troops from Finland and an end to German expansion in the Balkans and the Middle East. This was fruitless, however. The nazis persisted in their gangster policies in these areas and went on trying to consolidate their positions there and create a direct threat to the security of the USSR.

As the documents show, Hitler admitted that as soon as Molotov departed he decided he "would settle accounts with Russia as soon as fair weather permitted".[42]

In October 1940 Hitler's troops marched into Romania. In November of the same year the fascist governments of Romania and Hungary announced their allegiance to the Tripartite Pact.[43]

In order to block the nazi advance into the Balkans the Soviet Union proposed mutual assistance pacts to certain countries threatened with aggression. In 1939 to 1940 the Soviet government twice

[39] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Memorandum by People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs to Soviet Ambassador in London, on results of Berlin negotiations, November 17, 1940.

[40] *Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. XII, p. 310.

[41] *Falsifiers of History (An Historical Memorandum)*, Moscow, 1948, p. 70 (in Russian).

[42] *The Testament of Adolf Hitler. The Hitler-Borman Documents*, London, 1959, p. 76.

[43] See V. L. Israelyan, L. N. Kutakov, *The Diplomacy of the Aggressors*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 108-27 (in Russian).

offered such a pact to Bulgaria. The first offer was made through the Bulgarian envoy in Moscow on September 20, 1939. It was rejected by the Bulgarian government on the grounds that "this pact may give rise to complications or Bulgaria may be asked to conclude a similar treaty by other powers, which would mean signing our own death warrant".[44]

Despite the obvious desire of the Bulgarian government to avoid concluding a pact with the USSR, the latter made new moves to encourage Bulgaria to ensure its independence in the face of the German danger. A Soviet delegation was sent to Sofia. On November 25, 1940 it again offered Bulgaria a pact of mutual assistance.[45] But this second proposal was also rejected by the Bulgarian King and his government. This was due to the influence of nazi Germany, for which the possession of Bulgaria was of great strategic importance in the plan for an attack on Yugoslavia and the USSR, for strengthening Germany's positions on the Black Sea, and also for asserting German influence in Turkey. Bulgaria's pro-fascist ruling clique headed by the king and Prime Minister Filov, in defiance of the Bulgarian people's national interests, were already secretly negotiating with Hitler and had taken the path of rapprochement between Bulgaria and nazi Germany.

On January 17, 1941 the Soviet government again told the German government that the Soviet Union regarded the eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula a zone of its security and that it could not remain indifferent to events in this area.[46]

The policy of Bulgaria's monarchist government reached its logical culmination on March 1, 1941, when Bulgaria joined the Tripartite Pact and allowed its territory to be occupied by German troops. This meant its enslavement by Germany.

On March 4 the Soviet government made a statement exposing the anti-national policy of the Bulgarian rulers, who had agreed to let German troops into their country. It stated that this pact would "lead not to the strengthening of peace but to expansion of the sphere of war and the involvement of Bulgaria in hostilities".[47] The Soviet demarche was the last attempt to prevent Bulgaria's becoming a satellite of nazi Germany. But it was too late.

The Soviet government also tried to safeguard Turkey against subordination to Germany.

[44] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Report of Soviet Ambassador in Sofia to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, October 17, 1939.

[45] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Soviet Delegation and the King Boris of Bulgaria, November 25, 1940.

[46] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, USSR, and German Ambassador in USSR Schulenburg, January 17, 1941.

[47] *Izvestia*, March 4, 1941.

On March 25 the Soviet government denied rumours spread by hostile circles alleging that the USSR would attack Turkey if Turkey was compelled to go to war. It assured the Turkish government that if Turkey was attacked, it could "count on complete understanding and the neutrality of the USSR".[48] The Turkish government replied with an expression of gratitude and for its part gave a similar assurance to the Soviet Union.

It was obvious that Germany was preparing for an attack on Yugoslavia. On April 5, 1941 the Soviet government concluded a treaty of friendship and non-aggression with Yugoslavia. The treaty stated out that if one of the contracting sides was attacked by another state, the other undertook to maintain a policy of friendly relations with that side.[49] This obligation showed the Yugoslav people at a time when they were in grave danger that they had a true friend in the shape of the USSR. The treaty was universally and justly assessed as public support for Yugoslavia and official condemnation of nazi aggression by the Soviet Union. On April 6, 1941 nazi Germany attacked Yugoslavia. On April 13 the Soviet government also publicly condemned the Horthy government of Hungary for its attack (together with Germany) on Yugoslavia.[50]

But the nazis ignored the position of the USSR. By this time they had gone far ahead with direct preparations for war against the Soviet Union.

Having broken the heroic resistance of the Yugoslav army, which was not armed up to modern standards, the nazis occupied the whole country. After this they invaded Greece, which the Italian armies had still been unable to subdue. The fate of Greece was sealed.

The Soviet Government's Resistance to Japanese Aggression in the Far East

The Soviet government was deeply concerned about the Far East. The Soviet Union was still helping the Chinese people in their struggle against the Japanese aggressors. In 1939, not long before the outbreak of war in Europe, the Soviet government had granted China fresh credits of 150 million American dollars. With these funds China acquired weapons and equipment for waging its war of liberation.[51] In 1940 the USSR granted China two loans totalling 200 million American dollars. At the beginning of 1941, when China was badly in

[48] *Izvestia*, March 25, 1941.

[49] *Izvestia*, April 6, 1941.

[50] *Izvestia*, April 13, 1941.

[51] *International Relations in the Far East (1870-1949)*, Moscow, 1951, p. 459 (in Russian).

need of aircraft, the USSR sent 200 bombers and fighters to her assistance. Large amounts of arms and military supplies were also sent to China from the Soviet Union through Sinkiang. Soviet volunteer pilots fought on the Chinese fronts and, on the evidence of Chinese sources, rendered considerable assistance to the Chinese air force.[52] Thus, in the course of 40 months of war 986 Japanese aircraft were destroyed. Chinese sources have pointed out that these successes were associated with the activities of Soviet pilots.[53]

The United States and the Western powers adopted a diametrically opposite position with regard to the Sino-Japanese war. Not until September 1939 did the United States annul its trade agreement with Japan. Even so, unlicensed deliveries of aircraft and spare parts, optical appliances, machine-tools, oil, lead and scrap iron, etc., continued right up to July 1940. In August, the American authorities banned the export of aircraft fuel to Japan and the ban was later extended to scrap iron, pig iron and steel. From February 1941 licenses were introduced for the export of non-ferrous metals, oil refining equipment, and oil containers. Only on the eve of the attack on Pearl Harbour did the United States restrict the export of American oil to Japan. In 1941 the magazine *Amerasia* wrote: "If the Japanese war machine had not been given continuous access to essential supplies of American and British oil, iron, steel, copper, machinery, etc., or if the defenders of China had been granted really substantial assistance, the British and American Governments would not today be urgently discussing ways and means of defending Malaya and Indies against a Japanese attack.

"But ten years of American and British tolerance have enabled Japan to advance step by step in her openly proclaimed campaign for the conquest of Greater East Asia."[54]

The Soviet Union was still compelled to keep massive armed forces on its Far Eastern borders in case of Japanese aggression. This need was dictated by the experience of Japanese aggression in the region of Lake Khasan and the Khalkhin-Gol River. However, the presence of Soviet troops in the Far East was of great significance not only for the defence of the USSR but also for the Chinese people's resistance to the Japanese imperialists because it tied down large Japanese forces on the Soviet borders. This was particularly important for the 4th and 8th Chinese armies, led by the Communist Party of China.

Soviet assistance to China had severely aggravated relations between the USSR and Japan and the Japanese militarists, particularly

[52] Peng Ming, *A Brief History of the Friendship Between the Peoples of China and the Soviet Union*, Moscow, 1957, pp. 99, 102 (Russ. ed.); *Dagunbao*, June 26, 1955.

[53] *Singhua Jihpao*, November 22, 1940; Peng Ming, op. cit., p. 102.

[54] *Amerasia* (New York), Vol. V, No. 1, March 1941, p. 2.

War Minister Itagaki, intended to conclude a military alliance with Germany against the USSR.

The Red Army's defeat of the Japanese forces on the Khalkhin-Gol River had a sobering effect on the wilder Japanese militarists and the conclusion of the Soviet-German treaty deprived them of the main pillar for their anti-Soviet plans—reliance on the approach of war between Germany and the USSR. On September 9, 1939 the Japanese Ambassador came to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and proposed the conclusion of an armistice and the setting up of a redemarcation commission and a commission for the peaceful regulation of possible future conflicts.

The next day the Soviet government gave its answer. It agreed to set up a commission for the peaceful regulation of military conflicts and a redemarcation commission. The latter was to include representatives of the USSR and the Mongolian People's Republic on one side, and Japan and Manchoukuo on the other. Together with the government of the MPR the Soviet government declined the Japanese proposal for demilitarisation of the Khalkhin-Gol area and proposed restoring the border line that had existed before the conflict.

Long negotiations followed. At the session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on March 29, 1940 the Soviet government declared: "It must eventually be understood in Japan that the Soviet Union will under no condition allow any violation of its interests. Only if there is such an understanding of Soviet-Japanese relations can they develop satisfactorily."[55] Finally, on June 9, 1940 agreement in principle was reached on the border line between the Manchoukuo and the MPR in the area of the military conflict that had taken place the previous year.

The lesson the Japanese militarists had learned at Khalkhin-Gol had not been wasted. After this defeat the Japanese government became concerned over the lack of a settlement of many issues involving the Soviet Union. These issues included the Japanese concessions on Sakhalin, fishing rights, and so on. In March 1940 the Japanese Foreign Minister noted with evident alarm that "no progress has yet been made in settling the disputed issues between us and the Soviets".[56] Representatives of business circles in Tokyo, who were extremely interested in fishing in Soviet waters and also in trade with the USSR and concessions on Soviet territory spoke out in favour of improving Soviet-Japanese relations. The aggravation of Japanese-American contradictions also induced the Japanese ruling circles to show some concern for the normalisation of relations with the other great power in the area—the Soviet Union.

[55] 6th Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, March 29-April 4, 1940, Minutes, Moscow, 1940, p. 41.

[56] See L. N. Kutakov, *History of Soviet-Japanese Diplomatic Relations*, Moscow, 1962, p. 253 (in Russian).

During the negotiations at the beginning of July 1940 the Japanese government proposed a Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact. The Japanese proposal contained a condition that was unacceptable to the USSR. It maintained that the pact should be based on the Soviet-Japanese treaty of 1925. Some articles of this treaty, and the Portsmouth Treaty of 1905 on which it was based, had been blatantly violated by Japan. Suffice it to recall that the Portsmouth Treaty provided for the evacuation of Manchuria and its return to China, which the Japanese had nevertheless annexed in 1931. The Japanese coal and oil concessions on North Sakhalin provided for in the treaty of 1925 were a source of constant conflict. The Soviet government proposed negotiations for the liquidation of these concessions. However, despite the defects of the Japanese draft, the Soviet government expressed its agreement in principle to begin negotiations for a neutrality pact in so far as it was aimed at strengthening peace in the Far East. It should be remembered that the Soviet government had long ago offered Japan such a pact on several occasions.

On October 30, 1940 the Japanese government made a fresh proposal, which amounted essentially to an offer to conclude a Japanese-Soviet non-aggression pact (not neutrality, as formerly proposed). The draft agreement handed to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs by the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow Tatekawa no longer mentioned the 1925 treaty. It was proposed that disputed issues between the USSR and Japan should be settled only after conclusion of the pact.[57]

The Soviet Union did not share this point of view. On November 18, 1940 the Japanese side was shown a Soviet draft of a neutrality pact and the Soviet government announced that it could not agree to the conclusion of such a pact without settlement of the main unsolved questions of Soviet-Japanese relations. The Soviet government proposed simultaneous signing of the pact and an agreement on liquidation of the Japanese coal and oil concessions on North Sakhalin. It agreed to guarantee Japan deliveries of Sakhalin oil for five years on the usual commercial terms to the extent of 100,000 tons annually.

The Japanese government rejected the Soviet draft. It objected to the liquidation of Japanese concessions on Sakhalin and put forward its own plan for "solving" this question. It proposed that the USSR should sell North Sakhalin to Japan. Naturally, the Soviet government firmly rejected this arrogant proposal.

On February 11, 1941 the Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka told the Soviet Ambassador that he intended to pay a visit to Europe (he had been invited to Berlin by the nazi government) and would like to visit Moscow on the way. "The chief purpose of his journey to Europe," the Ambassador stated in reporting what the Japanese minister had

[57] Ibid., p. 275.

told him, "is to meet the leaders of the Soviet government."[58]

The Soviet government took a favourable view of Matsuoka's intentions. He arrived in Moscow and on March 24, 1941 began negotiations on a neutrality pact. The talks immediately ran into difficulties. The Japanese side would not agree to liquidation of the concessions on North Sakhalin. This led to a deadlock.

On March 26 Matsuoka left Moscow for Berlin to meet the leaders of nazi Germany. On the way back Matsuoka again stopped off in Moscow. Here he tried once more to arrange the sale of North Sakhalin. Faced with a repeated categorical refusal, the Japanese minister ended by giving up the concessions on Soviet soil. On April 13, 1941 a neutrality pact between the USSR and Japan was signed in Moscow. The pact covered a period of five years and provided that both Contracting Parties (Article 1) should undertake to maintain peaceful and friendly relations between them and mutually respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the other Contracting Party. Article 2 stipulated that "should one of the Contracting Parties become the object of hostilities on the part of one or several third Powers, the other Contracting Party will observe neutrality throughout the duration of the conflict".[59] In the declaration appended to the treaty it was stated that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics pledged to respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of Manchoukuo, while Japan undertook a similar obligation in relation to the MPR. An exchange of letters confirmed Japan's undertaking to liquidate its concessions on North Sakhalin within six months.

In signing this pact with Japan the Soviet Union sought to ensure its security in the Far East, particularly as war with Germany was obviously imminent in the West. At the same time "the Soviet-Japanese pact testified to the diplomatic defeat of Germany, which had counted on drawing Japan into war against the USSR".[60] Although it was impossible to trust the Japanese government, the conclusion of the pact served a useful purpose. It showed that for the time being Japan did not intend to attack the Soviet Union. The signing of the pact was therefore a success for Soviet diplomacy in the general system of measures designed to ensure the security of the USSR.

* * *

The Second World War was assuming an ever wider scope and spreading to more and more parts of the globe. The "new order" was

[58] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in Japan and Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka, February 11, 1941.

[59] *Izvestia*, April 15, 1941; *New York Times*, April 14, 1941.

[60] *History of the Second World War, 1939-1945*, Vol. 3, pp. 354-55 (in Russian).

being set up in all occupied territories which signified unprecedented oppression, harsh exploitation and even the physical extermination of huge masses of the population. Millions of innocent people were done to death in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, France and Greece. All the raw material resources and industry of the occupied countries were mobilised to serve the needs of the states of fascist bloc and their armed forces.

After the French surrender Britain's position became extremely critical. Now it was fighting not only for its colonies, for its great power status, but also to preserve its national independence. The fascist sword was poised over Britain. For the British it was now a just war for national survival.

The German claims to world domination and the Japanese aggression in Eastern Asia and the Pacific evoked serious concern in the United States. Calls for participation in the struggle against the German and Japanese aggressors therefore acquired increasing force.

Recognising the danger of fascist enslavement, the peoples of many countries became increasingly persistent in demanding more resolute government resistance to the aggressive powers. The best sons and daughters of the nations oppressed by the fascist yoke rose up in struggle. The Communists were everywhere in the foremost ranks of the popular resistance. The people's liberation struggle developed under their leadership. The pioneers of this anti-fascist war were the Polish people, at the end of 1939. From the second half of 1940 the struggle of the masses of the people of various countries against fascist aggression began to spread. And this rapidly had an effect on the general character of the Second World War. For the states that were fighting against Germany and its allies it increasingly became an anti-fascist war of liberation.

Subsequently, the Soviet Union's entry into the war as a result of the treacherous attack by nazi Germany was the decisive factor in completing the process that converted the Second World War into a just war of liberation.

The main result of Soviet foreign policy during the initial period of the Second World War was that the Soviet Union succeeded in avoiding being drawn into hostilities in the extremely unfavourable circumstances of 1939. Had war come at that moment, the Soviet Union would have had to wage it in isolation and on two fronts at once, not only in the West but also in the Far East. The Soviet Union succeeded in obtaining an almost two-year respite, which had vital international repercussions. In the course of these two years the Soviet Union liberated Western Byelorussia, Western Ukraine, Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. All these, and also the Baltic states had the opportunity of joining the Soviet Union.

At the same time the reunification of the Western lands with their Mother country, the Soviet Union, meant that Soviet border was

moved to the west and conditions were thus created for strengthening the defences of the USSR.

This postponement of Soviet involvement in the Second World War gave time for further strengthening of the country's defence capacity, for developing the military-industrial base, for reorganising the work of the defence industry with an eye to the obviously increasing war danger, and for a further improvement in the preparedness of the armed forces. However, some problems connected with the country's defence were not solved. Many of the measures planned were not fully carried out owing to lack of funds and time.

No less important were the Soviet Union's gains from the standpoint of foreign policy. By the time the nazis attacked the Soviet Union, its international status, like the whole international situation, had undergone a fundamental change. The Land of Soviets had succeeded not only in breaking out of the diplomatic isolation to which it had been consigned by the Munich deal between Britain and France and the fascist states, but also in destroying the whole anti-Soviet front engineered at Munich.

Britain was now fighting Germany and the imperialist contradictions between the USA, on the one hand, and Germany and Japan, on the other, had become aggravated to such an extent that there was no realistic possibility of collusion between the governments of the US and Britain and the fascist aggressors. The objective preconditions for unity in an anti-fascist coalition of the world's major states- the USSR, the USA, and Britain- had been created.

CHAPTER XIII

FOREIGN POLICY OF THE SOVIET UNION DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR (1941-1945)

Nazi Germany Attacks the USSR

At dawn on June 22, 1941 Hitler Germany made its treacherous attack on the Soviet Union without a declaration of war.

The Soviet government knew that Germany was preparing for war against the USSR despite the existence of the non-aggression treaty. In the years 1939-1941, therefore, measures had been taken to strengthen the country's defence capacity and build up the fighting power of the Soviet Armed Forces.

By this time the Soviet economy had at its disposal a material and technological base that enabled it to organise mass production of all types of modern weapons. However, production of the new weapons on a mass scale and the re-equipment of the army were lagging behind schedule, were not being carried through at a fast enough rate.[1]

In view of the increased danger of war new troop formations were set up during 1939-1941. But at the time of Germany's attack the new divisions were still only at the stage of manning and receiving their equipment. The building of fortified areas along the new state border was not proceeding rapidly enough and had not been completed by the time of the German attack.

The Hitler clique's aggressive plans and its intention of attacking the Soviet Union were obvious to the Soviet government and the leadership of the Soviet Armed Forces. A miscalculation was made, however, in determining the time of this attack. J. V. Stalin mistakenly assumed that Hitler would not risk violating the non-aggression treaty in the near future unless he were given a pretext for doing so.

Right up till the last moment Stalin considered it inexpedient to bring the troops in the border military districts into a state of full combat readiness. The leadership of the People's Commissariat for Defence at that time shares responsibility with Stalin for this and for the defects in the general preparations for defence.

The German government had started mass concentration of its troops along the Soviet borders as early as 1940. By June 1, 1941 this process was basically completed and on June 10 the German units

[1] *History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, 1941-1945*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1960, p. 481 (in Russian).

moved up to their starting positions for invasion of the USSR. The Soviet government was informed about the concentration of German troops on the Soviet borders.[2]

The Soviet government tried by diplomatic means to make it difficult politically for Germany to attack the Soviet Union. It was with this end in view that on June 14, 1941 the Soviet press published a TASS statement, the text of which had been handed to the German Ambassador in Moscow the day before. It declared that "in the opinion of Soviet circles the rumours about Germany's intention to violate the treaty and launch an attack on the USSR are completely groundless...."[3] The message was couched in terms of good will throughout. It provided convincing evidence of the Soviet Union's desire for peace.

The German government did not respond to the TASS statement. It did not even publish it in Germany. This was further confirmation that nazi Germany already regarded any explanations to the Soviet Union as superfluous. It had completed its preparations for war. Hitler had taken the decision to attack the USSR and he could not be stopped by any kind of diplomatic moves.

On the evening of June 21, after fresh irrefutable evidence that the German army was about to attack the USSR had been received, the decision was taken to warn the commands of the military districts on the border and the naval fleets of the impending danger and to bring the armed forces into a state of combat readiness. But it was too late. Particularly because, owing to defective organisation in transmitting the directive to those concerned with carrying it out, many of them learned the contents of this document only after the outbreak of hostilities.[4]

Meanwhile, on the evening of June 21 (at 21.30 hours) the Soviet government once again tried to save peace by entering into negotiations with the German government. Acting on the instructions of his government, V. M. Molotov invited the German Ambassador in Moscow Schulenburg to come and see him and informed him of the contents of a Soviet note concerning the numerous border violations by German aircraft which the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin was to hand to Ribbentrop. After this the People's Commissar tried in vain to get the Ambassador to discuss with him the state of Soviet-German relations and to elucidate whatever claims Germany might have on the Soviet Union. Specifically, Schulenburg was asked the question: "What is the basis of Germany's dissatisfaction with the USSR if such

[2] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Reports of Soviet Ambassador in Berlin to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs from March to June 21, 1941, and also Reports from the Military Attaché.

[3] *Izvestia*, June 14, 1941.

[4] *History of the Great Patriotic War*..., Vol. II, Moscow, 1961, p. 11 (in Russian).

dissatisfaction exists?" The People's Commissar also asked for an explanation of the increasingly widespread rumours about imminent war between Germany and the USSR, and of the mass departure from Moscow in recent days of German embassy staff and their wives. In conclusion Schulenburg was asked, "What is the explanation for the absence of any response on the part of the German government to the reassuring and peaceable TASS statement?", referring, of course, to the statement of June 14.[5]

On the same night, June 22, at 00.40 hours, a telegram was sent to the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin informing him of what had been said in the conversation between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and Schulenburg and of the questions posed by the Soviet side in the course of this conversation. The Ambassador was instructed to meet Ribbentrop or his deputy and put the same questions to him. But the Ambassador was never able to carry out this instruction. Within a few hours the German armed forces invaded the Soviet Union.

The nazis hurled against the USSR almost the whole enormous might of German imperialism's war machine as well as the armed forces of nazi Germany's satellites: Finland,[6] Horthy Hungary, boyar Romania, and somewhat later, fascist Italy. At the time of the attack Germany and her allies had concentrated on the Soviet front 190 divisions, including crack tank formations numbering 3,500 tanks, and 50,000 guns and mortars. Nearly all nazi Germany's land forces along with a concentration of more than 3,900 combat aircraft (about 60 per cent of Germany's air power) were set in motion against the USSR. The Soviet-German front thus at once emerged as the decisive front of the Second World War. It became the scene of a gigantic battle, the outcome of which was to decide the destinies not only of our country but of the world. In the morning of June 22 a meeting of the Politburo of the Party Central Committee was held. It drew up and endorsed the text of an appeal to the Soviet people in connection with the outbreak of war. At noon the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars V. M. Molotov read out this appeal on the radio.

[5] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of Conversation Between People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, USSR, and German Ambassador in the USSR, June 21, 1941.

[6] As the secret diplomatic papers of nazi Germany published in the West documentarily confirm, Finland's ruling circles were making extensive expansionist plans in regard to the Soviet Union. Taking advantage of nazi Germany's attack on the USSR, the government of Finland hastened to declare war on the Soviet Union. It proposed to Hitler that he should set up German colonies east of the borders of "great Finland" so that she should no longer have common frontiers with the Soviet Union (see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918 to 1945*, Vol. 13, London, 1964). The expansionist plans of Romania's ruling circles were no less extensive.

"All our people must now be solid and united as never before," the appeal stated.[7]

"This war," the appeal emphasised, "has been imposed upon us not by the German people, not by the German workers, peasants and intellectuals, whose sufferings we well understand, but by the clique of bloodthirsty nazi rulers of Germany...."[8]

The directive of the CC CPSU(B) and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, passed on June 29—the basic programme document for reorganising the Party and the country in accordance with the demands of war—was permeated with Leninist ideas on defence of the socialist motherland. "All for the front, all for victory! " was the main idea of the directive.[9]

On June 30 the State Defence Committee headed by J. V. Stalin was set up to command all operations in organising resistance to the enemy.

In the very first days battles on a scale never seen before developed in the Soviet-German theatre of operations, along the whole front from the Black Sea to the Baltic.

Aims of the USSR and the Western Powers in the Second World War

In attacking the USSR nazism was pursuing not only imperialist expansionist aims for seizing and plundering Soviet territory. It wanted to destroy the socialist system and the Soviet state. Nazi Germany intended to enslave the peoples of the USSR. It was a question of life and death for the Soviet state, of life and death for the peoples of the Soviet Union, and of the freedom and independence of our Motherland. The war against the nazi invaders was thus rightly called the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people. It aroused feelings of deep sympathy and support among all progressive mankind throughout the world, including the Western countries. Various democratic, progressive organisations in Britain, the United States and other countries of the anti-fascist coalition regarded the Soviet Union's struggle against the nazi bloc as offering a real prospect for ridding humanity of the threat of nazi enslavement. They demanded unity of action with the Soviet Union. "Defend America by giving full aid to the Soviet Union, Great Britain and all nations who fight against Hitler!" Such were the words of a manifesto adopted on June

[7] *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. V, Book One, Moscow, 1970, p. 145 (in Russian).

[8] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1946, p. 128 (in Russian).

[9] *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. V, Book One, p. 157 (in Russian).

28, 1941 by the National Committee of the Communist Party, USA, in connection with nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union.[10] They expressed the mood of the broad masses. The mass of the people showed such energy in the campaign for establishing relations of alliance with the USSR that many public and other organisations in the capitalist countries began to set up contacts with the Soviet Union from the very first days of the war. Under the pressure of broad sections of the British working class the leaders of the British trade unions took the step of establishing permanent cooperation with the Soviet trade unions.

The Soviet Union's entry into the war, triggered by the attack of nazi Germany and its allies on the USSR, completed the process of change that had been taking place in the character of the Second World War. For all Germany's adversaries the war was becoming a war of liberation.

During the Great Patriotic War Soviet foreign policy was faced with new and important tasks, determined by the general aims of the USSR in this war.

The main task of Soviet foreign policy was to ensure the optimal international conditions for organising resistance to the enemy, the future liberation of enemy-occupied territory and total defeat of the nazi aggressors.

Above all, Soviet diplomacy had to ensure that the bourgeois states already fighting nazi Germany and fascist Italy became as reliable as possible allies of the USSR. For this purpose a coalition of states that were fighting nazi Germany had to be created and strengthened and a second front in Europe opened in the shortest possible time.

It was also essential to make every effort to prevent any attack by the states that were maintaining neutrality in Germany's war against the USSR, such as Japan, Turkey and Iran.

And, finally, it was the aim of Soviet foreign policy to render all possible assistance to the peoples of Europe languishing under the yoke of nazism in order to bring about their liberation and restore their sovereign rights.

The policy of the USSR in relation to the smaller European states taken over by nazi Germany was clearly formulated in a telegram to the Soviet Ambassador in London of July 3, 1941. It stated: "On the question of restoration of the national states of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia you should maintain the following position:

a) We stand for the creation of an independent Polish state within the frontiers of national Poland, including certain cities and regions that recently passed to the USSR; moreover, the Soviet government considers the question of the nature of the state regime in Poland to be the internal affair of the Poles themselves;

[10] *The Communist*, Vol. XX, No. 8, August 1941, p. 682.

b) We also stand for the restoration of the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav states in such a way that the question of the state regime in these states shall be their internal affair."[11]

On September 26, 1941 the Soviet Union recognised de Gaulle "as the leader of all Free French wherever they may be" and expressed its readiness to render him all-round assistance and cooperation in the common struggle against nazi Germany and her allies. The government of the USSR expressed its firm resolve "to ensure the complete restoration of the independence and greatness of France"[12] after joint victory had been achieved.

As the *History of Diplomacy* correctly observes, the Soviet Union's recognition of the Free French movement amounted, in effect, to establishing relations of alliance with it.[13]

The general aims of the war against the states of the fascist bloc were formulated in the speech delivered by J. V. Stalin, Chairman of the State Defence Committee, on July 3, and in the Declaration of the government of the USSR to the Inter-Allied Meeting in London in September 1941. The Declaration stated that all nations and all states compelled to wage war against Hitlerite Germany must work "to bring about the speediest and most decisive defeat of the aggressor and assemble and devote all their strength and resources for the full accomplishment of that task". The Declaration went on to speak of the need for a postwar organisation of the world that would rid the peoples of fascism.

"The Soviet Union," the Declaration proclaimed, "defends the right of every nation to the independence and territorial integrity of its country, and its right to establish such a social order and choose such a form of government as it deems opportune and necessary for the better promotion of its economic and cultural prosperity."

The Soviet government expressed its confidence that "as a result of complete and final victory over Hitlerism the foundations will be laid for proper relations of international cooperation and friendship in accord with the wishes and ideals of the freedom-loving peoples".[14]

The governments of Britain and the United States also sought to smash Germany and her allies, to remove the danger of German world hegemony, and to maintain their independence. So the war waged by the United States and Britain against nazi Germany had now become a just war.

But the British and American ruling circles were thinking in terms of weakening Germany as an imperialist rival and a dangerous compet-

[11] *Documents and Materials Relating to the History of Soviet-Polish Relations*, Vol. VII, Moscow, 1973, p. 198 (in Russian).

[12] *Soviet-French Relations During the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945. Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1959, p. 47 (in Russian).

[13] *History of Diplomacy*, Vol, IV, Moscow, 1975, p. 217 (in Russian).

[14] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. I, pp. 164-65.

itor in the world market. They had no desire to destroy fascism and reaction in Germany and other countries. The ruling circles of the United States and Britain intended to use the war to spread their influence over as large a number of countries as possible in all parts of the globe. They wanted to establish their own, Anglo-American supremacy in the postwar world. These imperialist motives became more pronounced in the policies of the Western powers as the defeat of Germany approached. Churchill, who since May 1940 had been head of the British government, calculated that the war would weaken the Soviet state, and that by the end of hostilities it would be dependent on Britain and the USA. This is confirmed, for example, by Churchill's letter to Eden of January 8, 1942, in which he wrote: "No one can foresee how the balance of power will lie or where the winning armies will stand at the end of the war. It seems probable however that the United States and the British Empire, far from being exhausted, will be the most powerfully armed and economic *bloc* the world has ever seen, and that the Soviet Union will need our aid for reconstruction far more than we shall then need theirs."[15]

The USSR and the Building of the Anti-Hitler Coalition

Britain and the United States were compelled to join in a coalition with the Soviet Union in so far as both they and the Soviet Union were confronted with a common and extremely dangerous enemy. The Soviet Union was holding down a large part of nazi Germany's armed forces on the Soviet-German front. Its role in the war had become the basic and decisive factor in the outcome of the struggle against Hitler's Third Reich.

In view of the Soviet Union's role in the war, the leaders of Britain and the United States after Germany's attack on the Soviet Union publicly declared on behalf of their countries their readiness to give the USSR full support.

Churchill never ceased to hate the USSR and communism, but realising that Britain was in mortal danger and that she could not deal with Germany without the Soviet Union, he was obliged to declare in his radio speech of June 22, 1941:

"Hitler wishes to destroy the Russian power because he hopes that if he succeeds in this he will be able to bring back the main strength of his Army and Air Force from the East and hurl it upon this island.... His invasion of Russia is no more than a prelude to an attempted invasion of the British Isles.... The Russian danger is therefore our danger and the danger of the United States."[16]

[15] W. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. III, London, 1950, p. 616.
[16] *The Times*, June 23, 1941.

Despite Churchill's solemn assurance that Great Britain would give "whatever help we can to Russia and to the Russian people",[17] the Soviet Union received no substantial assistance in 1941. The governments of Britain and the United States were obviously waiting to see how events would develop on the Soviet-German front. Guided by their imperialist interests, these governments were trying to prolong the war in order to weaken the USSR.

There were in Britain and the United States public figures who did not consider it necessary to conceal such intentions. They proposed that the USSR should be left to fight Germany single-handed and that the Soviet Union and Germany should be allowed to shed as much of each other's blood as possible. Such plans were expressed with open cynicism by an American senator who was later to become President of the United States. "If we see that Germany is winning," said Harry Truman, "we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible." In Britain similar ideas were developed by J. Moore-Brabazon, who was then Minister of Aircraft Production. "Let Germany and the USSR exhaust each other," he said, "and by the end of the war Britain will be master of the situation in Europe."[18] Nevertheless, thanks to the pressures of the war situation and the demands of the democratic public, the ruling circles of Britain and the United States were compelled to enter into an alliance with the USSR and form an anti-fascist coalition. Without this there could be no hope of victory over nazi Germany.

The formation of the military and political alliance between the USSR, Britain and the United States was not an instantaneous act. In legal terms it was formulated in several stages and completed in the first half of 1942.

From the outset of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet government made a number of major foreign policy moves designed to rally the anti-fascist states. The Agreement between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Providing for Joint Action in the War Against Germany was signed in Moscow on July 12, 1941. Its provisions included mutual undertakings to render assistance and support in the war and also to refrain from concluding any separate peace with the enemy. This agreement set the stage for the building of the anti-Hitler coalition.

A Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement was signed on July 18, 1941. This agreement was of great importance for the recognition of Czechoslovakia as a sovereign state. At that time both Britain and France,

[17] Ibid.

[18] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Telegram of Soviet Ambassador in Britain to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, USSR, September 6, 1941.

even on entering the war, had not withdrawn their recognition of Germany's annexation of Czechoslovakia. But the Soviet Union, as Beneš afterwards wrote in his memoirs, "which from the very beginning had so firmly spoken out against Munich and with such determination opposed the events of March 15, 1939, at this crucial moment delivered the mortal blow to Munich and all its consequences because quite firmly, without any reservations or conditions it again recognised the republic in its pre-Munich status".[19] On July 30, 1941 a similar, Soviet-Polish agreement was concluded. Besides commitments analogous to those of the Soviet-British agreement, these pacts also contained the agreement of the USSR to the formation of national Czechoslovak and Polish military units for the struggle against Germany on Soviet territory.[20]

Soon after the conclusion of the Soviet-British agreement the two countries took joint measures to prevent the use of the territory of Iran by the fascist powers. In August 1941, at the proposal of the British government Soviet and British troops simultaneously marched into Iran. The Soviet Union took this action for purposes of self-defence in accordance with Article 6 of the Soviet-Iranian treaty of 1921. The Soviet units occupied the northern areas of the country, and the British, the south-western areas. The intended attack on the USSR from the territory of Iran was thus prevented, the German plans for the Near and Middle East thwarted, and the rail and sea communications between the USSR and Britain through Iran and the Persian Gulf kept open. In December 1941, during British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden's visit to Moscow the exchange of opinions between the Soviet and British sides on joint participation in the war against Hitler Germany was continued.

Certain steps were also taken to broaden the relations between the USSR and the USA, which until December 1941 was not in a state of war with Germany.

Of great importance in determining the position of the United States towards the Soviet Union was the mission to Moscow of Harry Hopkins, a personal friend and adviser of Roosevelt. In July 1941 Hopkins realised from his observations on the spot that the notion of the probable rapid defeat of the USSR sprang from ignorance of the true state of affairs and the prejudice that was widespread in the West.

On August 2 there was an exchange of notes between the USSR and USA and the Soviet-American trade agreement and the agreement on economic aid for the Soviet Union in the war against nazi Germany

[19] E. Beneš, *Paměti*, Praha, 1948, p. 244.

[20] V. L. Israelyan, *The Anti-Hitler Coalition*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 26-32 (in Russian).

were extended for a year. The conference of representatives of the three powers held in Moscow, September 29 to October 1, marked an important stage in the development of Soviet-Anglo-American relations. This conference was concerned with the question of mutual military and economic assistance. Agreement was reached on the question of military supplies and was recorded in the minutes of the conference.

The declaration by the United Nations that was signed on January 1, 1942 in Washington by representatives of the four great powers (the USSR, USA, Britain and China) and 22 other states[21-22] helped to strengthen the alliance of the nations in the struggle against the nazi aggressors. As time went on, many other countries associated themselves with this declaration. It stated that complete victory over the fascist aggressors was needed for the defence of the life, liberty and independence of the peoples. It involved the obligation that each government should employ its full resources, military or economic, against those members of the Tripartite Pact and its adherents with which such a government was at war. Each government pledged itself to cooperate with the other governments that had signed the declaration and not to make a separate armistice or peace with the enemies.

The Soviet-British Treaty of Alliance in the War Against Hitlerite Germany and Her Associates in Europe and of Collaboration and Mutual Assistance Thereafter, of May 26, 1942, and also the Soviet-US agreement on the principles underlying mutual assistance in the conduct of the war against aggression, of June 11, 1942, were important diplomatic documents that helped to consolidate the anti-Hitler coalition.

The Soviet-British treaty consisted of two parts. The first concerned relations between the USSR and Great Britain during the war. Article 1 of the Treaty stated: "...The high Contracting Parties mutually undertake to afford one another military and other assistance and support of all kinds in the war against Germany and all those states which are associated with her in acts of aggression in Europe." According to Article 2 the Contracting Parties undertook "not to enter into any negotiations with the Hitlerite or any other Government in Germany that does not clearly renounce all aggressive intentions, and not to negotiate or conclude, except by mutual consent, any armistice or peace treaty with Germany or any other state associated with her in acts of aggression in Europe".

The second part of the treaty defined the relations between the USSR and Britain after the war. The sides undertook to cooperate in the postwar period for the preservation of peace and resistance to aggression. They undertook to take all measures to make any fresh

21-22 *Yearbook of the United Nation*, New York, 1947, p. 1.

violation of peace by Germany impossible, and if this should nevertheless happen, to render each other military and other help in war against Germany and any state connected with her in acts of aggression in Europe.

On the insistence of the British government a reservation was inserted in the treaty to the effect that the commitments on mutual assistance should remain in force until such time as by mutual agreement they were seen to be superfluous in view of the setting up of appropriate international organisation for ensuring peace and security.

The treaty provided for the development of wide-ranging political and economic contacts between the USSR and Britain. And finally, under Article 7, each side undertook "not to conclude any alliance and not to take part in any coalition directed against the other high Contracting Party".[23]

Under the Soviet-US Agreement the United States undertook to continue supplying the USSR with defence materials and the Soviet government agreed to help in strengthening United States defences, to supply the United States with defence materials, services, benefits and defence information.[24] Similar agreements with the USA were concluded by many other states that entered the war against the fascist bloc. As for a treaty of alliance, however, the United States did not conclude such a treaty with the Soviet Union at any time during the Second World War.

Despite the declarations made by the British and United States governments back in the summer of 1941, concerning their readiness to help the Soviet Union in the struggle against nazi Germany, neither government was in any hurry to fulfil its promises. On September 4, 1941, in a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador Churchill frankly declared that "until the winter we shall not be able to give you any serious assistance—neither by way of a second front nor by starting large-scale deliveries of the weapons needed by you".[25]

In the middle of October 1941 Lord Beaverbrook, one of Churchill's closest friends and advisers and a member of the Cabinet, said in British government circles and in confidential discussions with representatives of the United States government that "... our military leaders had shown themselves consistently averse to taking any offensive action...." Although the Russian resistance "has created a quasi-revolutionary situation in every occupied country". The chiefs of staff, he said, "ignore the present opportunity".[26]

[23] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. I, pp. 271-72.

[24] Ibid., pp. 278-82.

[25] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation on September 4, 1941, between I. M. Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London, and Winston Churchill.

[26] Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins, An Intimate History*, New York, pp. 394, 395.

Only after the Soviet Union had proved its strength in single combat with nazi Germany and its satellites by halting the Hitler's onslaught on Moscow did the governments of Britain and the United States gradually move on from words to actions and begin to give the Soviet Union somewhat more assistance. But even now this assistance took the form not of military action but only of supplies of war materials and weapons.

Such help was clearly inadequate. Britain and the United States were defaulting all round on the obligations they had undertaken at the Moscow conference and the Red Army fought the battle of Moscow in the autumn and winter of 1941 without any substantial support from the allies. As is shown by the report of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade on Britain's fulfilment of obligations under the Moscow protocol for October, November and December 1941, "only 669 of the 800 aircraft that Britain was to have supplied in these months to the Soviet Union were actually delivered, only 487 of the 1,000 tanks, and only 330 of the 660 armoured carriers".[27] These are typical examples.

Even less encouraging was the picture of protocol fulfilment on the American side. The United States had undertaken to deliver between October 1941 and June 30, 1942, 900 bombers, 900 fighters, 1,125 medium tanks and as many light tanks, 85,000 lorries, and other items. In fact the Soviet Union received from the United States in this period only 267 bombers (29.7 per cent), 278 fighters (30.9 per cent), 363 medium tanks (32.3 per cent), 420 light tanks (37.3 per cent), 16,502 lorries (19.4 per cent), and so on.[28] It will be readily understood how much more difficult the unreliability of the allies' promises made it for the Soviet command to plan military operations. Moreover, the armaments supplied by the allies were often obsolescent or defective. For a long time, for instance, Britain went on supplying the USSR with the outdated Hurricane fighters, and evaded supplying the latest British Spitfire fighters and the American Aerocobras.

In the summer of 1942, in the gravest period of the war for the Soviet Union, when Hitler's hordes were driving towards the Volga and the Caucasus, the American and British governments stopped sending convoys with military supplies to the USSR by the northern sea route altogether. On July 16 General Burnes, who was responsible for supplies to the USSR, told the Soviet representative that "the governments of the United States and Britain have decided to stop sending ships with cargoes for the USSR through the northern

[27] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Foreign Trade Commissariat Report on British Fulfilment of Obligations to Supply the USSR in 1941.

[28] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Foreign Trade Commissariat Reports on US Fulfilment of Obligations to Supply the USSR under Lend-Lease Between October 1941 and June 30, 1942.

ports".[29] But it was through these ports that three-quarters of all cargoes for the USSR should have been sent. The British government not only temporarily stopped sending convoys by the northern sea route but also sharply curtailed deliveries of military supplies to the USSR along the Trans-Iranian railway despite its promise to increase the carrying capacity of Iran's railways. On August 15, 1942 there were 34,977 tons of undelivered military supplies piled up in the ports of the Persian Gulf.[30] In July and August 1942, according to a Commissariat for Foreign Trade report, Britain did not supply the USSR with a single aircraft.[31]

And yet the governments of the United States and Britain were well aware as early as the beginning of March 1942 that the forthcoming fighting on the Soviet-German front would be on a huge scale. They admitted that the outcome of the war was being decided on this front. Here are some examples. In his letter to Roosevelt of March 7, 1942 Churchill wrote, "everything portends an immense renewal of the German invasion of Russia in the spring, and there is very little we can do to help the only country that is heavily engaged with the German armies".[32] With Soviet representatives the tone was somewhat different. On March 16, 1942 in a conversation with Soviet Ambassador Maisky, Eden stated that "Britain must assist the USSR to the maximum extent of which it is capable". Churchill confirmed that, according to his information, Hitler was preparing for a powerful spring offensive against the Soviet Union. Endless troop trains were rolling eastward. There were many other symptoms, he said, that "you will have to endure a terrible onslaught. We must help you in every way we can".[33] Practically not much was done. The help that was given did, of course, provide some support to the Red Army in its military operations and evoked the gratitude of the fighting men, the Soviet people and the government. But this does not allow one to close one's eyes to the recorded facts concerning breaches of the allied commitments.

Imperialist propaganda tries to belittle the role of the Soviet Union in the defeat of fascism in the Second World War. One of its staple arguments is the delivery of arms and other items from the United States under lend-lease.* It is claimed that without these supplies the

[29] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in London and General Burnes, July 16, 1942.

[30] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Message from People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to Soviet Ambassador in Britain, August 25, 1942.

[31] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Foreign Trade Commissariat Report on British Deliveries of War Materials to the USSR, July-August 1942.

[32] W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, London, 1951, p. 273.

[33] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in London and Churchill and Eden, March 16, 1942.

* The Act on Lend-Lease was passed by the US Congress on 11 March, 1941. It established a system by which the United States was able to lend or lease to the allied countries the arms and other materials they needed for waging the war.

Soviet Union could not have overcome nazi Germany. Just how untrue such statements are can be seen by comparing the volume of Soviet war production and the supplies delivered by the United States and Britain. The most indicative factor is the supplying of the Red Army with the main types of weapons during the Second World War, with aircraft and tanks. According to American official data, the United States supplied the USSR during the whole war with 14,450 aircraft and about 7,000 tanks.[34] Up to April 30, 1944 Britain sent 3,384 aircraft and 4,292 tanks. In this period 1,188 tanks were supplied from Canada.[35] During the last three years of the war, however, Soviet industry was producing more than 30,000 tanks and self-propelled guns and as many as 40,000 aircraft per year. Thus, the sum total of industrial items supplied by the allies throughout the war amounted to only 4 per cent of Soviet industrial output.[36]

Despite the fact that the British and US governments created all kinds of delays in supplying the USSR and, what was more, delayed the opening of the second front, the very fact of the setting up of the anti-Hitler coalition, uniting states of two opposed systems, was an event of great historic importance.

The formation of the anti-Hitler coalition was significant not only because it helped to create a fighting community of all nations resisting fascist oppression. The coalition thwarted Hitler's plan to split the ranks of his opponents and destroy them separately. It deprived the ruling classes of Britain and the United States of the opportunity to make separate agreements with Germany. The creation of this anti-fascist alliance of states and peoples furthered the isolation of the fascist aggressors.

The formation of the anti-Hitler coalition helped to strengthen and expand cooperation between the peoples of the major world powers that were fighting aggression—the USSR, USA, Britain, France and China. It helped to consolidate all the anti-fascist forces in the countries of Europe and Asia and considerably expanded the front of the global struggle against fascism.

The Soviet Union's Campaign for the Opening of a Second Front in Europe, 1941-1943

From the outset of the Great Patriotic War the Soviet government had striven to make the anti-Hitler coalition as active and effective as possible in the struggle against the fascist aggressors. The best way

[34] Quoted in *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya*, No. 10, 1945, p. 12.

[35] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1946, pp. 145-47.

[36] N. Voznesensky, *The Military Economy of the USSR During the Great Patriotic War*, Moscow, 1947, p. 74.

of doing this would have been for the allies to have at once get about opening a second front in France. This would not only have relieved the pressure on the USSR in its desperate and bloody struggle against the common enemy, it would also have substantially shortened the Second World War and the enslaved peoples' liberation and lifted the threat of fascist barbarism from humanity as a whole. The Soviet government proposed to its allies that they should all act together in coordinated military operations, but its position was not supported either in London or Washington. As far as the struggle on land was concerned, the USSR fought alone against Germany and its allies in Europe and bore the main burden of the war on its shoulders.

On July 18, 1941 the Soviet government brought up the question of opening a second front with the British Prime Minister. It pointed out that "...the military position of the Soviet Union, and by the same token that of Great Britain, would improve substantially if a front were established against Hitler in the West (Northern France) and the North (the Arctic). A front in the north of France, besides diverting Hitler's forces form the East, would make impossible invasion of Britain by Hitler". Despite the difficulties involved in opening a second front, "the best time to open this front is now, seeing that Hitler's forces have been switched to the East and that he has not yet been able to consolidate the positions he has taken in the East".[37]

The imperialist essence of the policy adopted by the ruling circles of the United States and Britain came out very clearly over the question of organising a second front in Europe. On this key issue the opponents of active assistance to the USSR gained the upper hand. Churchill's response to the Soviet government's appeal was negative. "The Chiefs of Staff do not see any way of doing anything on a scale likely to be of the slightest use to you," Churchill wrote to Stalin.[38] Meanwhile, the German forces were continuing their offensive. The USSR had lost more than half the Ukraine. In the north the enemy had reached the immediate approaches to Leningrad.

On September 3, 1941 the Soviet government again drew attention to the necessity to open before the end of the year a second front which could have diverted 30 or 40 German divisions from the Eastern Front.[39] But again Churchill replied with a refusal.[40]

[37] *Correspondence Between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Presidents of the USA and the Prime Ministers of Great Britain during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 21. See also: I. N. Zemskov, "The Diplomatic History of the Opening of the Second Front in Europe (1941-1945). (A Review of Documents) in: *International Affairs*, Nos. 3, 5, 11, 1970; Nos. 4, 6, 9, 12, 1974; Nos. 2, 3, 1975.

[38] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, pp. 21-22.

[39] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 28.

[40] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 29.

In view of the British government's totally negative attitude to a second front in Europe, the Soviet Union did not raise the question any more in the subsequent autumn months of 1941. The Soviet Union's military position remained extremely critical. Hitler's troops were poised over Moscow.

The situation changed only when the fascist armies were smashed at Moscow in December 1941, and when this defeat was followed up by a Soviet counter-offensive that continued up to the end of March 1942. Both in its stubborn defence and its counter-offensive the Red Army inflicted heavy losses on Hitler's armies. But the German command was able to replenish its forces on the Soviet front by switching troops from Western Europe. Between December 1941 and April 1942 the nazi command transferred 39 divisions and six separate brigades, including 16 divisions from France, to the Soviet-German front.[41]

If Germany had been denied the opportunity to manoeuvre freely with its strategic reserves, the break-through achieved by the Red Army in the battle of Moscow could have been consolidated and the course of the war through the spring and summer of 1942 would have taken a more favourable course. But this would have necessitated at least a minimal diversionary manoeuvre on the Western Front by means of a landing of allied troops in France.

This was not done and the result was that Hitler's armies succeeded not only in avoiding disaster but in mounting a new offensive in the spring of 1942 that in the South brought them to the banks of the Volga. By the summer of 1942 there were 237 enemy divisions concentrated on the Soviet-German front, and by autumn, 266.

In this period the second front issue arose with fresh urgency. This time it was the subject of direct negotiations and correspondence not only between the Soviet and British governments but also with the government of the United States, which had entered the war against Germany in December 1941.

In contrast to Churchill, who was a confirmed opponent of a landing of allied troops in Europe, Roosevelt at first spoke out in favour of a second front. For example, at the beginning of March 1942 he told the Soviet Ambassador in the United States Maxim Litvinov that he was "pressuring the British" to set up a second front and was ready to send American troops to England for the purpose.[42] At the beginning of April 1942 Roosevelt sent Stalin a personal message stating that he had "...a very important military proposal involving utilization of our armed forces in a manner to relieve your critical Western Front".[43] Emphasising the importance he attached to

[41] *History of the Great Patriotic War...*, Vol. II, p. 357 (in Russian).

[42] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in the USA and Roosevelt, Beginning of March 1942.

[43] *Correspondence...*, Vol. II, p. 18.

this, Roosevelt asked for Soviet representatives to be sent to Washington for talks. By these declarations, evidently made under the influence of the growing demands of American public opinion for activisation of the US and British war effort, the President endeavoured to show himself as an advocate of the rapid opening of a second front.

In connection with the American President's April message the Soviet government instructed its Ambassador in Washington to find out what specific questions the President wanted to discuss in his meeting with the Soviet representatives. In his reply Roosevelt maintained that he and his advisers had decided that a second front against Germany should be opened by means of a landing in France, but that this plan had not yet been approved by Britain and that he would like the Soviet government to help him "reinforce this plan".[44]

In its reply to the President on April 20, 1942, the Soviet government agreed to send Soviet representatives to Washington "...for an exchange of views on the organisation of a second front in Europe in the near future". The message stated that these representatives would also visit London for an exchange of views with the British government.[45]

During a conversation that took place when this message was delivered Roosevelt told the Soviet Ambassador about the mission of Marshall and Hopkins to Britain. He said that the British favoured a second front only "in principle", but in practice were trying to put off the opening of such a front until 1943, while he was insisting on opening it now. Roosevelt also said that it seemed desirable to him that the Soviet representatives should stop off in London on the way back from Washington so that they could exercise a double pressure on the British government by speaking on their own and on his behalf.[46]

The Soviet government sent People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov to Britain and the United States. On his way to Washington he stopped off in London where talks on important questions, specifically the conclusion of the Anglo-Soviet treaty, took place between him and the British government leaders. The Soviet side brought up the question of the second front and referred to Roosevelt's initiative on this point. The British, however, refused to undertake any specific commitments.

The subsequent negotiations in Washington resulted in a Soviet-American communiqué stating that "complete agreement was reached

[44] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in the USA and Roosevelt, April 14, 1942.

[45] *Correspondence...*, Vol. II, p. 19.

[46] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in the USA and Roosevelt, April 20, 1942.

on the urgent task of opening a second front in Europe in 1942".[47]

In view of the agreement on a second front that had been reached during the Soviet-American negotiations the British government was obliged to agree to the signing of an Anglo-Soviet communiqué, which exactly repeated the Soviet-American formulation on this question.

Thus the United States and Britain publicly and officially promised to satisfy the Soviet government's legitimate demand for the opening of a second front in Europe in the immediate future.

In practice the British government had no intention of fulfilling this promise. In its memorandum of June 10, 1942 it made various reservations for the purpose of evading its duty as an ally. One such reservation stated that the British government would open a second front in 1943 if this could not be done in 1942.

Churchill made every effort to persuade Roosevelt to give up the idea of opening a second front in Europe in 1942 and to agree to substitute for this operation a landing of allied troops in North Africa. This fully accorded with the selfish interests of British imperialism in that it left the Soviet Union without effective support and was a move towards consolidating the British position in France's North-African domains. During his visit to the United States, June 19-25, 1942, the British Premier, as Sherwood writes, used many lurid figures of speech to block a trans-Channel operation in 1942 in favour of an operation in North Africa.[48] The British finally obtained a decision from Roosevelt on this point in the July of that year, during the Anglo-American talks in London.

As a result the British and American governments did not keep their pomises to organise a second front in 1942 that had been recorded in the American-Soviet and Anglo-Soviet communiqués.

Assessing the positions of the British government on this question, the Soviet Ambassador in Britain informed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on July 16, 1942 that on the basis of conversations with Churchill, Eden, Beaverbrook and other British statesmen it was becoming clear that the Soviet Union would have to rely only on its own forces in the 1942 campaign. "It must be assumed," the Ambassador wrote, "that in our most critical hour we are being abandoned to the will of fate by our allies. This is a very unpleasant truth but there is no sense in trying to soften it. It must be borne in mind for the future."[49]

On July 18, 1942 Churchill sent Stalin a message referring for the first time to the allies' refusal to open a second front in 1942.[50] In his

[47] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. I, p. 285.

[48] Robert E. Sherwood, op. cit., p. 590.

[49] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Telegram of Soviet Ambassador in Britain to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, USSR, July 16, 1942.

[50] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 59.

reply of July 23 Stalin observed that "...despite the agreed Anglo-Soviet Communiqué on the adoption of urgent measures to open a second front in 1942, the British government is putting off the operation till 1943". And he went on, "In view of the situation on the Soviet-German front, I state most emphatically that the Soviet Government cannot tolerate the second front in Europe being postponed till 1943."[51]

The question to be decided now was how best to dispose of the undertakings given to the Soviet Union on the opening of a second front in Europe in 1942. The decision was that Churchill should himself go to Moscow and explain to the Soviet government why the promises to the Soviet Union were not being kept.

In August 1942 Churchill arrived in Moscow for talks, at which the United States was represented by Averell Harriman.

On August 12 Churchill stated in Moscow that he considered it impossible to organise a second front in Europe in 1942. The Soviet government firmly expressed its disagreement with this allied position.

During the talks on August 13, 1942 Stalin handed Churchill and Harriman a memorandum stating that 1942 offered "the most favourable conditions for organising a second front in Europe because nearly all the German strength, including its best forces, have been diverted to the Eastern Front". The Soviet government therefore believed that "precisely in 1942 a second front in Europe is possible and should be organised".[52]

Nevertheless, Churchill in a memorandum handed to the Soviet government on August 14 announced the final refusal of Britain and the United States to open a second front in Europe in 1942. The allies confined themselves to promising to launch Operation Torch in North Africa and there open a new war front. The British Prime Minister declared that a broad invasion of the European continent would be launched in the spring of 1943 by 27 American and 21 British divisions. Harriman fully supported Churchill.

The long delay in opening a second front was due to the desire of the British and US governments that the Soviet Union against which the Hitler command had concentrated the whole might of the German war machine, should be drained of as much blood and strength as possible. Britain and the United States also wanted to save their own forces at the expense of the Soviet Union and use them only in the culminating stage of the war and for conducting the postwar policy of diktat. The true aims for the delay in opening a second front have been revealed by the United States former defence secretary Stimson. In his memoirs he writes: "...not to open promptly a strong

[51] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 61.

[52] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Stalin and Churchill, August 13, 1942.

Western front ... would be to leave the real fighting to Russia."[53] And this was what Churchill and many other people who shared his views in the ruling circles of Britain and the United States were trying to do.

The Soviet Ambassador in Britain informed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs that Churchill and Roosevelt were "dominated by one and the same idea, the idea of getting an 'easy war' for themselves".[54] Explaining the term "easy war" he wrote in another telegram: "Specifically this means that Germany must be crippled on land mainly by the Soviet Union. In this struggle Britain will give the USSR only its 'cooperation' and the longer it takes Britain to enter into such 'cooperation' the better, because she will then be fresher for the finish and it will be easier for her to play a leading role in the future peace conference. And vice versa, from this point of view, it will be an advantage to have the USSR reach the finish as weak and exhausted as possible."[55]

The sabotaging of the second front by the British and American governments aroused growing protests among the British and American democratic public, which was raising strong demands for active support of the Soviet Union. "Now is the time to open a second front," many British and American newspapers wrote in 1942. Many progressive democratic organisations petitioned the British and American governments, insisting that they should fulfil the commitments they had undertaken as allies. More than 60,000 people demonstrated for a second front in London's Trafalgar Square at the end of July 1942. Similar demonstrations took place in many cities of the United States.

The British and American governments not only did not open a second front; they did not even fulfil their undertakings to supply the USSR with arms.[56] In October 1942 Britain supplied the USSR with only 52 aircraft, and with only 33 in November. Through July-November 1942 Britain delivered only 394 of the 1,000 aircraft that it had promised according to the Protocol and only 642 of the promised 1,250 tanks.[57] Not very much was received from the United States either. Thus it came about that during the battle on the Volga, the greatest battle of the Second World War, the Soviet Union was denied effective aid from its allies.

What was more, at the Anglo-American conference in Casablanca in

[53] H. Stimson and G. Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, New York, 1948, p. 527.

[54] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Telegram of Soviet Ambassador in Britain to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, USSR, December 7, 1942.

[55] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Telegram of Soviet Ambassador in Britain to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, USSR, October 22, 1942.

[56] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 75.

[57] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Foreign Trade Commissariat Report on British Deliveries of Military Supplies to the USSR under Second Protocol.

January 1943 the question of opening a second front in Europe in 1943 remained virtually unresolved. The allies agreed to launch only a restricted operation against the Cotentin (Cherbourg) Peninsula in August 1943 instead of the promised broad invasion of France in the spring.

The participants in the conference tried to conceal from the Soviet government this fresh breach of their undertakings on the second front. Churchill and Roosevelt's joint message of January 27, 1943 on the results of the Casablanca conference was worded in general terms and gave no concrete details of operations or their time limits. In response to the Soviet government's request for specific explanations concerning the decisions that had been taken, Churchill with Roosevelt's approval in his message of February 9, 1943 set the time for the invasion of the European continent by Anglo-American forces as August or September 1943.[58] There can be no doubt that this was done in the full knowledge that the Soviet command would have to take into account the actions of its allies in planning operations on the Soviet-German front. In his reply of February 16 the head of the Soviet government observed that "...the situation calls for shortening these time limits to the utmost and for the opening of a second front in the West at a date much earlier than the one mentioned". "So that the enemy should not be given a chance to recover," Stalin wrote, "it is very important, to my mind, that the blow from the West, instead of being put off till the second half of the year, be delivered in spring or early summer."[59]

In May 1943 there was another meeting in Washington between Roosevelt and Churchill, also devoted to the further conduct of the war against the axis powers. The allies realised that the question of helping the Soviet Union effectively by opening a second front had become urgent. The Soviet Union was still fighting alone on land, in single combat with an extremely powerful and still very dangerous enemy. Emphasising the importance of the second front the Soviet government on June 24, 1943 brought to the attention of the British Prime Minister the fact that continued confidence of the USSR in its allies was not the only thing at stake. "One should not forget," a message from Stalin stated, "that it is a question of saving millions of lives in the occupied areas of Western Europe and Russia and of reducing the enormous sacrifices of the Soviet armies, compared with which the sacrifices of the Anglo-American armies are insignificant."[60]

The governments of the United States and Britain could not fail to see that the Russian people and the other peoples of the Soviet Union, who were shedding their blood unsparingly for the common cause

[58] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 113.
[59] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 115; Vol. II, p. 54.
[60] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, pp. 142-43.

regarded the sabotaging of the second front as an expression of American and British hostility towards them and their country.

Nevertheless, the Washington conference passed a decision to postpone the opening of a second front in Europe until May 1944. This was blatant deception of an ally and betrayal of a promise. On June 11, 1943 the Soviet government protested against the United States and Britain's breach of their obligations and declared that "it cannot align itself with this decision, which moreover, was adopted without its participation and without any attempt at a joint discussion of this highly important matter and which may gravely affect the subsequent course of the war".[61]

The fresh delay in opening a second front showed yet again that Britain and the United States were persisting in a policy designed to weaken the USSR to the maximum extent.

The great battle of Stalingrad that had begun in the autumn of 1942 led to the encirclement of a very large concentration of enemy troops, which was finally liquidated at the beginning of 1943. In the six and a half months of this battle on the Volga the enemy lost more than a quarter of all the forces that were then in action on the Soviet front.[62] These enormous losses broke the strength of the nazi army. At a war conference on February 1, 1943 Hitler was compelled to admit that "there is no longer any possibility of ending the war in the East by offensive means".[63] The historic victory on the Volga marked a fundamental turning point in the course of the war.

The year 1943 signalled further great victories for Soviet arms, achieved thanks to the efforts of the Soviet people and their armed forces and despite the failure of the allies to live up to their obligation, achieved in a situation of single combat between the USSR and nazi Germany and her satellites in Europe. In the middle of January 1943 Soviet troops broke the seige of Leningrad. The summer of 1943 brought fresh triumphs for Soviet troops in the Battle of Kursk. After heavy fighting in the summer and autumn of 1943 units of the Red Army advanced over 500 km in the central sector of the front, and 1,300 km in the south, clearing nearly two-thirds of the Soviet territory occupied by the enemy. The victories on the Volga and in the Kursk bulge spelled the defeat of Germany and the liberation of Europe from nazi enslavement.

The fundamental turn in the course of the war against Germany due to the victories of the Red Army at the end of 1942 and through 1943 was brought about without substantial assistance from either the United States or Britain.

[61] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 137; Vol. II, p. 65.

[62] *History of the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1964, p. 64 (in Russian).

[63] Quoted in *Pravda*, February 10, 1963.

The Soviet victories offered the peoples who had fallen under the fascist yoke a real prospect of liberation and inspired them to fight against their oppressors. The resistance movement and the partisan struggle against the fascist aggressors continued to grow.

As victory over the aggressor drew nearer it became necessary to publicise a Soviet programme for the postwar organisation of the world. This was expounded on November 6, 1943 in the report made by J. V. Stalin on the 26th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. This programme envisaged:

1. Liberation of the peoples of the world from the fascist oppression and assistance for them in restoring their national states;
2. Providing the liberated peoples with the full right and freedom to themselves decide the question of their state organisation;
3. Severe punishment of war criminals;
4. Creation of the necessary conditions for preventing any possibility of fresh aggression by Germany;
5. Organisation of long-term economic, political and cultural cooperation among the peoples of Europe.

The Soviet Union waged a consistent struggle for application of these democratic principles in the postwar organisation of the world. On Soviet initiative a number of vital questions concerning the conduct of the war and postwar organisation were raised at the conference of foreign ministers of the USSR, USA and Britain in Moscow, October 19 to 30, 1943.

The Moscow and Teheran Conferences of 1943

The basic question to be discussed at the Moscow Conference, October 19 to 30, 1943, was how to shorten the war. It was raised on the initiative of the Soviet government.

At the first session of the conference on October 19 the Soviet delegation tabled the following proposal:

"For the purpose of shortening the war the following plan should be considered:

"The carrying out of urgent measures on the part of the governments of Great Britain and the United States in 1943 that would ensure the invasion of Northern France by the Anglo-American armies and that, in conjunction with the mighty blows of the Soviet armies against the main forces of the German army on the Soviet-German front, should radically disrupt Germany's military-strategic position and bring about a decisive shortening of the war.

"In this connection the Soviet government considers it important to find out whether the declaration by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt at the beginning of June 1943 that the Anglo-American forces would carry out an invasion of Northern France in the spring of 1944

remains in force.[64]

The Soviet delegation at the conference did not succeed in persuading the allies to make any firm and precise commitments on the opening of a second front in Europe. Their statements that the Channel invasion would be launched in the spring of 1944 contained serious reservations.

As General Ismay said, the invasion would be carried out as soon as "climatic conditions in the Channel area become favourable". There would also have to be a considerable reduction of German air strength in North-West Europe. The second condition was that the German reserves in France at the moment of invasion should not exceed 12 fully operational and well-equipped divisions, not counting coastal, air and training units.[65]

For its part, the Soviet delegation demanded putting it on record in the top secret protocol of the conference that the Soviet government "takes note of these statements by the allies and expresses the hope that the plan for the invasion of Northern France by Anglo-American troops in the spring of 1944, set forth in these statements, will be carried out on time".[66]

In the conference communiqué it was pointed out that the governments of the three powers had recognised the first and primary aim to be "hastening the end of the war". However, there was still a danger of fresh postponement in opening the second front. This transpired from the statement of the British Foreign Secretary at the Moscow Conference, who said that "in the context of the present situation in Italy the Prime Minister (Churchill.–*Ed.*) is not quite sure that this plan ... could be carried out".[67]

By delaying the end of the war the governments of the United States and Britain condemned the peoples to fresh sacrifices and sufferings. This dragging out of the war by the allies cost the Soviet people an enormous number of lives.

On another point in the agenda of the Moscow Conference rather more agreement was achieved. The conference passed a resolution stating that the collaboration between the three powers achieved during the war should be continued on into "the period following the end of hostilities".[68]

[64] *The Soviet Union's Participation in International Conferences During the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45*. Vol. 1. The Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, USA and Great Britain in Moscow, 19-30 Oct., 1943. Collection of Documents (hereafter: *The Moscow Conference*), Moscow, 1978, pp. 96-97 (in Russian).

[65] Ibid., pp. 102-03.

[66] Ibid., p. 366.

[67] Ibid., p. 215.

[68] *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. VI, Boston, 1945, p. 228.

The conference considered a number of important matters of postwar organisation, including the German question, the situation in Italy, the question of Austria, ways of ensuring security in the postwar period, creation of an international peace-keeping organisation, and so on.

As early as November 8, 1941 the Soviet government expressed its desire for the allies to achieve a definite understanding "concerning war aims and plans for the postwar organisation of peace".[69]

The postwar structure of Germany occupied an important place in the relations between the allies. In a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador on November 27, 1941 the British Prime Minister raised for the first time the question of the division of Germany as a fundamental factor in the postwar structure of Europe. "Most of the blame rests on Prussia," Churchill said. "In the future Bavaria, Austria, Würtemberg, etc., must be freed from Prussian domination." On December 7, during another meeting with the Ambassador Churchill formulated his idea more precisely: "The main task," he said, "is to eliminate the German danger once and for all. To do this there must be complete disarmament of Germany at least for a whole generation and Germany must be split up, Prussia, in particular, being separated from the other parts of Germany."[70]

The question of dismembering Germany raised by the British Premier remained one of the main subjects of discussion between the allies. In Britain and the United States the idea was widely publicised in the press. The books and articles by a very exprienced high official of the Birtish Foreign Office R. G. Vansittart acquired special renown.

In January 1942, on instructions from Roosevelt a so-called Consultative Commission on Postwar Problems was set up in the United States. Its main task was to work out plans for the postwar organisation of Germany. Together with a special "research team" of the State Department this commission soon put forward for consideration by the US government plans that envisaged the division of Germany into three, five or seven completely isolated parts.

Describing these plans, Eden, who was then Foreign Secretary in the Churchill government, told I. M. Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London, in April 1943 that his misgivings with regard to the US position on the German question were unjustified. It had emerged from conversations with Roosevelt and his closest associates, Eden said, that they were all of the opinion that after the war Germany should not only be disarmed completely and for a long period but also weakened for a very long time, if not forever. The best way of doing this, in their view, was to split Germany up into several states, and

[69] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 42.

[70] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in Britain and Churchill, December 7, 1941.

this idea was being pushed very forcefully by Sumner Welles.[71]

In contrast to all this the Soviet Union had no plans for the dismemberment of Germany. The Soviet government had spoken out publicly against identification of the Hitler clique with the German people. This had been said at an early stage of the war, in the order of the day issued by the People's Commissar for Defence on Red Army Day, February 23, 1942. "The experience of history shows," the order stated, "that Hitlers come and go but the German people, the German state remain."

The question of dismembering Germany came up for discussion at the Moscow Conference. The American side proposed that Germany should be occupied by troops of the three powers and be subjected to control and "political decentralisation".[72]

The British Foreign Secretary Eden was also in favour of the dismemberment of Germany and presented a detailed plan for putting it into practice. "We should like," he said, "to see Germany divided into separate states and, particularly, we should like to have Prussia separated from the other parts of Germany. We should therefore like to encourage the separatist movements in Germany that may develop after the war. Of course, it is difficult at the moment to say what opportunities we shall have for achieving these aims and whether it will be possible to carry them out by means of force. In this respect I leave the question open, but the possibility of carrying out these aims by forceful means is not to be ruled out."[73]

The US Secretary of State Gordell Hull observed that "in the top circles" of the United States, "they are iclined to favour the dismemberment of Germany", but that "for the time being it will be better to adopt a temporising position". The Soviet side stated that "the question is in the process of being studied".[74]

The intention of the three powers to collaborate in deciding vital postwar problems was specifically expressed in the resolution passed by the conference on establishment of the European Advisory Commission (EAC) that was to be permanently stationed in London. The EAC was charged with the task of "studying any European problems connected with the termination of military operations that the three governments see fit to pass on to it, and of giving joint advice to the three governments on these matters". The EAC was also instructed to draw up the terms for the surrender of the enemy states.

The Moscow Conference considered several questions relating to the postwar organisation of Europe. The United States and Britain

[71] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of Conversations Between Soviet Ambassador in Britain and Eden, April 7 and 12, 1943.

[72] *The Moscow Conference*, p. 293.

[73] Ibid., p. 181.

[74] Ibid., pp. 182-83.

were secretly planning to set up federative groups of small and medium states in Central and Southeastern Europe with the idea of using them as instruments for spreading the influence of British and American imperialism. Such plans implied an attempt to recarve the map of Europe in the interests of British and American imperialism without consulting the will of the peoples involved. The Soviet government could not consent to such projects.

The Soviet point of view on this question was also put forward at the conference. The Soviet government based itself on assumption that the liberation of the small countries and restoration of their independence and sovereignty was essential to the postwar organisation of Europe and building a lasting peace. The Soviet delegation drew attention to the danger of any premature artificial grouping of small countries in accordance with plans made without the participation of the peoples involved, and stated that no outside interference or external pressure should be exerted on the peoples of Europe in deciding how their lives should be lived after the war. The Soviet delegation pointed out that attempts to federate the small countries on the basis of decisions by émigré governments that did not express the true will of their peoples would involve imposing decisions that did not correspond to the peoples' wishes. And finally, the Soviet government firmly rejected any attempt to revive the anti-Soviet *cordon sanitaire* policy, which was concealed in the federation projects proposed by the West. The Soviet stand on the question of federations and similar schemes imposing unity on the small and medium states of Europe was entirely in the interests of the peoples of these countries, and of the postwar security of the USSR and other states, and was based on the right of the peoples of Eastern and Central Europe to determine their own destinies.

The conference also considered the question of the French Committee of National Liberation. The US and British policy towards France was determined by "Basic Scheme for Administration of Liberated France" and amounted in fact to the establishment of an occupation regime and drastic curtailment of the Committee's activities.

The Soviet delegation could not accept that. In view of the issues it raised, the Anglo-American document with the criticisms incorporated was referred to the European Advisory Commission.[75]

The United States and British representatives at the conference tried to persuade the USSR to restore diplomatic relations with the reactionary Polish émigré government.

In August 1942 this government had removed from the USSR the Polish military units formed on Soviet territory in accordance with the Polish-Soviet agreement of July 30, 1941. It had also demanded

[75] *The Moscow Conference*, pp. 34, 340.

the restoration of the frontiers laid down under the Treaty of Riga. This would mean Poland's retaining areas populated by the Ukrainians and Byelorussians. In the spring of 1943 this reactionary clique had given direct support to Goebbels' anti-Soviet propaganda and on April 25, 1943 the Soviet government had replied by breaking off relations with the émigré government. In raising the question of restoration of these relations the US and British governments were guided not by a desire to improve Soviet-Polish relations. They were exclusively concerned to strengthen the positions of the Polish reactionaries, whom they quite justifiably regarded as their agents. After the liberation of Poland by Soviet troops they wanted to establish in Poland the authority of the London émigré government, which was connected with British and American imperialism. The Soviet government refused to restore relations with this anti-Soviet government, which was estranged from its own people and did not understand their basic interests –the necessity for friendship with the USSR, without which it had proved impossible to defend Poland in 1939, and without which she could not now be liberated from her German oppressors.

The conference drew up a Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security.[76] Apart from the three countries participating in the conference, a fourth country, China, was brought into this declaration. The declaration stated that the allies would pursue the war until the enemy laid down arms and surrendered unconditionally. When the war ended the efforts of the allies would be devoted to establishing peace and security and an international organisation for maintaining peace and security would be set up in the near future. It would be based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all peace-loving states. All such states—large and small—could be members of the organisation. The declaration proclaimed that in postwar politics the powers would not use military means to resolve disputed questions without mutual consultations. The governments of the four powers also solemnly declared that they would consult and collaborate with each other and with other members of the United Nations for the purpose of achieving a feasible general agreement on arms regulation in the postwar period. The declaration thus outlined some of the basic principles of the future United Nations Organisation.

The conference also published a declaration regarding Italy, which was signed by the representatives of the USSR, USA and Britain. The declaration was proposed by the Soviet government and endorsed by all three powers. By the time the conference took place a considerable part of Southern Italy had been cleared of fascist troops. In the summer of 1943 the Mussolini regime was overthrown. Italy surrendered on September 3. However the forces of reaction in Italy were not totally defeated. With their support the American and British

[76] *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. VI, p. 229.

authorities on the liberated territory conducted a separate policy that was anti-democratic in character. They acted in such a way that in a number of cases the Soviet government was confronted with an accomplished fact. On August 22, 1943 Stalin wrote to Roosevelt and Churchill: "To date it has been like this: the USA and Britain reach agreement between themselves while the USSR is informed of the agreement between the two Powers as a third party looking passively on."[77] From the outset the actions of the Anglo-American occupation forces in Italy were severely criticised both by democratic circles in Italy and by progressive public opinion in other countries. At the Moscow Conference the Soviet delegation asked the allies for full information on the carrying out of the agreement on the armistice with Italy. It put forward its proposals regarding the conditions of peace with Italy which would ensure the destruction of fascism and encourage the country's democratic development. These proposals were accepted and were expressed in the declaration endorsed by the conference. This declaration stated that the allies' joint policy in Italy should lead to the complete destruction of fascism and the establishment of a democratic regime. Moreover, it was noted that the declaration did not restrict "the right of the Italian people ultimately to choose their own form of government".

The conference decided to set up a Consultative Council on Italy composed of representatives of the USA, the USSR, Britain and the French Committee of National Liberation, Greece and Yugoslavia. The council was to formulate recommendations for coordinating allied policy in Italy. This decision had positive significance. It restricted to some extent the arbitrary actions of the American and British military authorities in Italy, which were extremely dangerous for the Italian working class and for the country's democratic development.

Further the conference of the three ministers passed a Declaration on Austria. This document stated that Austria had been the first free country to fall victim of nazi aggression and should be liberated from German domination. The governments of the three powers declared that Germany's annexation of Austria in 1938 was null and void. The declaration also expressed the desire of the three governments to see the future Austria free and independent.

At the same time attention was drawn to the fact that Austria bore some responsibility for its participation in the war on the German side. It was also pointed out that in the final settlement Austria's own contribution to her liberation would inevitably be taken into account.

During the conference the three powers published a Declaration on German Atrocities. The allies warned that war criminals would suffer severe punishment and that they would be judged by the peoples

[77] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 153.

against whom their crimes were perpetrated.

The Moscow Conference brought to light serious disagreements between the USSR and its allies from the capitalist world. But at the same time it showed the possibility of achieving coordinated solutions to the complex issues involved in the postwar settlement. The results of the conference were greeted with universal approval by democratic public opinion.

The Moscow Conference paved the way for the first meeting of heads of government of the three powers, which took place in Teheran, November 28 to December 1, 1943. It was attended by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, as heads of their respective delegations. The conference took place in a political atmosphere generated by the brilliant victories of the Red Army.

At the Teheran Conference the main attention was focussed on military questions, particularly that of the opening of a second front. The Soviet delegation pointed out that Britain and the United States' blatant breach of their commitments to open a second front either in 1942 or even in 1943 had prolonged the war and seriously impeded the general war effort against the fascist bloc. Even before the Teheran Conference the USSR had insisted on setting a firm date for the opening of the second front in order to reduce losses and accelerate the liberation of the enslaved peoples from the fascist oppression. But compared with the initial period of the war an objective change had now come about in the way the question of opening a second front could be raised. Now victory over nazi Germany was a foregone conclusion and could be achieved by the forces of the Red Army alone. In Teheran the Soviet side declared that "as soon as the landing in Northern France takes place, the Red Army will in turn start an offensive. If it were known that the operation will take place in May or June, the Russians could prepare not one, but several blows at the enemy". The Soviet government wanted to know the exact date for Operation Overlord,[78] as the landing operation on the north coast of France had been code-named.

When Stalin said that it would be a good idea to make a landing of allied troops in France "before the end of May" 1944, Churchill at first objected "I cannot undertake such an obligation" and proposed that the question of the timing of the operation in France should be passed on to a "military committee", which he wanted to set up specially for this purpose.[79]

Churchill's proposal was designed to further delay the decision, but this time he was unable to get his own way. Roosevelt supported the Soviet delegation and Churchill was obliged to give in. Roosevelt was afraid that if there was no landing of American and British troops in

[78] *International Affairs*, No. 8, 1961, p. 115.

[79] Ibid., pp. 113, 114.

France the whole of Western Europe would be liberated by the Red Army.

On November 30, 1943, in the presence of Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt, General Brooke made a statement on behalf of the United States and Britain declaring that Operation Overlord would "begin during the month of May. This operation would be supported by an operation against Southern France and the scale of this latter operation would depend upon the number of landing craft available at the time".[80]

In reply to this, at the same session Stalin made the following statement: "To prevent the Germans from manoeuvring their reserve and transferring any sizable forces from the Eastern Front to the West, the Russians undertake to organise a big offensive against the Germans in several places by May, in order to pin down the German divisions on the Eastern Front and to prevent the Germans from creating any difficulties for Overlord."[81]

Churchill, like Roosevelt, did not want to allow Soviet troops into Western Europe. But he had been counting on achieving this not by means of a landing in Northern France, which would mean fighting on the main strategic sector, where the allies could expect strong resistance from German forces. Churchill proposed closing the road for Soviet troops to the West by means of a landing in the Balkans, where the German resistance promised to be weaker and where Anglo-American troops ought to be able to forestall the Red Army, crush the democratic anti-fascist forces throughout Southeast Europe and establish strong positions there for Western imperialism. "... Whenever the PM argued for our invasion through the Balkans," President Roosevelt was afterwards to tell his son Elliot, "it was quite obvious to everyone in the room what he really meant ...He was above all else anxious to knife up into Central Europe, in order to keep the Red Army out of Austria and Romania, even Hungary, if possible...."[82] Churchill did not succeed, however, in substituting an invasion of the Balkans for a second front in France.

The American and British governments also confirmed their commitments regarding the numbers of the Anglo-American invasion forces in Western Europe, which had been set at one million men. On the insistence of the Soviet delegation Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to reach as rapid a decision as possible on the question of the commander-in-chief for this operation so that the allies would immediately begin practical preparations. One of the military decisions passed by the Teheran Conference recorded that the conference had noted the fact that Operation Overlord would be launched during May 1944

[80] Ibid., p. 158.

[81] Ibid., p. 118.

[82] Elliot Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, New York, 1946, p. 184.

together with an operation against Southern France. This latter operation would be launched on scale determined by the available landing craft. The conference further noted the declaration of Marshal Stalin that Soviet troops would start an offensive at about this time in order to prevent the transfer of German forces from the Eastern to the Western front.[83]

In the declaration published after the Teheran Conference the leaders of the three powers stated that they had coordinated plans for the destruction of the German armed forces and "reached full agreement on the scale and timing of the operations to be undertaken in the East, West and South". "No power on earth," the authors of the declaration wrote,"can prevent our destroying the German armies by land, their U Boats by sea, and their war planes from the air."

The decision to open the second front was reached over Churchill's opposition and in spite of Roosevelt's vacillations. The firm stand of the Soviet delegation was an important contributing factor. The US apprehensions that the war in the Pacific might otherwise drag out also played a part. Speaking at a conference with President Roosevelt on November 19, 1943, General Marshall, Chief of the US General Staff, put it as follows: "To undertake operations in this region would result in prolonging the war and also lengthening the war in the Pacific."[84]

The discussions at the Teheran Conference also dealt with postwar collaboration and measures to ensure lasting peace. In the published declaration the need for unity of action by the three great powers was emphasised.

The heads of the three governments exchanged opinions on the future organisation of Germany. Roosevelt proposed breaking it up into five states. "In my opinion," he stated, "Prussia must be weakened as far as possible, and reduced in size. Prussia should constitute the first independent part of Germany. The second part of Germany should include Hannover and the north-western regions of Germany. The third part, Saxony and the Leipzig area. The fourth part, Hessen Province, Darmstadt, Kassel and the areas to the south of the Rhine, and also the old towns of Westphalia. The fifth part, Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg. Each of these five parts would be an independent state. In addition, the regions of the Kiel Canal and Hamburg should be separated from Germany. These regions would be administered by the United Nations or the four powers. The Ruhr and Saar regions should

[83] *The Soviet Union's Participation in International Conferences during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45.* Vol. 2. The Conference of the Heads of States of the USSR, USA and Great Britain in Teheran, November 28-December 1, 1943. Collection of Documents (hereafter: *The Teheran Conference*). Moscow, 1978, p. 173 (in Russian); *International Affairs*, No. 8, 1961, pp. 117, 118.

[84] *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers. The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran, 1943*, Washington 1961, p. 259.

be placed under the control either of the United Nations or under the trusteeship of the whole of Europe."[85]

The British government was also in favour of dismembering Germany. British ruling circles hoped to gain control of the Ruhr and intended using its massive industrial potential to win a dominating position in Europe. The British delegation supported the basic propositions of the American plan and on its own behalf proposed isolating Prussia and separating Bavaria and a number of other south German states in order to weaken Germany. "I have two ideas," Churchill said. "The first is to isolate Prussia from the rest of Germany; the second is to separate Germany's southern provinces—Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, the Palatinate, from the Saar to Saxony inclusive." He also proposed setting up a "Danubian federation" that would comprise all the south German provinces and the Danube countries of Central Europe.[86]

The Soviet delegation held that a solution to the German problem should not entail destruction of the German state, but go along the lines of demilitarising and democratising it. The destruction of Hitlerism and the Hitler war machine, however, was indispensable. The Soviet government understood that the British plan for creating new associations of states in Europe was in fact aimed at establishing anti-Soviet blocs. The Soviet government was opposed to these anti-democratic plans because it believed that after the war the European peoples would strive to regain their independence. The Soviet delegation proposed referring the question of the dismemberment of Germany to the European Advisory Commission. On the subject of the British and American plans for Germany, Stalin stated plainly that he did "not like the plan for new associations of states"[87] He emphasised that he saw no great difference between the population of Prussia and other parts of Germany. Hopkins who was present at the conference during the discussion of proposals for dismembering Germany, describes the Soviet position as follows: "Stalin treated both proposals without any great enthusiasm."[88]

The heads of the three powers also exchanged opinions on the Polish borders.

The Soviet government had always stressed the need for an independent, democratic and strong Polish state after the war. To achieve this and strengthen peace in Europe it was necessary to secure for the Polish people just, historically substantiated borders that would serve Poland as peaceful borders with neighbouring states. In the course of history the territory of Poland had often been divided, so the task was

[85] *International Affairs*, No. 8, 1961, p. 122.
[86] Ibid., pp. 121-22.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, Vol. II, p. 493.

to convert the Polish borders from a source of conflict and wars into a factor of security and stability in Eastern Europe. As Poland's eastern border the Soviet government proposed the "Curzon line", which basically corresponded to the ethnographical frontier of the Polish people, while its western border was to be the "River Oder line".

At Teheran the Soviet delegation defended the interests of the Polish people and regarded it as essential that Poland's legitimate territories in the West should be returned to her. The head of the Soviet delegation reaffirmed that the USSR favoured the resurrection and strengthening of Poland. He emphasised that the Soviet Union was even more interested in maintaining good relations with Poland than other countries because Poland was its neighbour.[89] The discussion of the Polish question took place mainly during the bilateral, Soviet-British negotiations. Churchill agreed to Poland's borders being drawn along the "Curzon" and "Oder" lines. But he did so with an eye to restoring the reactionary émigré clique as the government of liberated Poland. In principle he also agreed to hand over Koenigsberg to the Soviet Union.

The conference passed a Declaration of the Three Powers Regarding Iran. The participants declared "their desire for the maintenance of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran".

The question of the war against Japan was also discussed. Throughout the war this country had conducted a policy sharply hostile to the USSR. The Japanese government had blatantly violated the Soviet-Japanese treaty of neutrality of April 13, 1941, whose very first article stipulated the maintenance of friendly relations. In view of Japan's breach of her obligations and in order to curtail the war in the Far East the Soviet delegation responded favourably to the repeated requests from the United States and Britain that the USSR should enter the war against Japan.[90] In order to further strengthen the anti-Hitler coalition and eliminate a centre of aggression in the Far East, Stalin stated that the Soviet Union would declare war on Japan after the defeat of nazi Germany.

The leaders of the three powers also exchanged views on other questions of world politics. It cannot be said that the discussion of the political questions passed off smoothly. Sometimes there were fierce polemics and some issues remained unresolved. Nevertheless the Teheran Conference was of great international importance. The principles of cooperation of the Great Powers in the anti-Hitler coalition triumphed. The declaration signed by the heads of government of the three allied powers emphasised that the USSR, United States and Britain would "work together in war and in the peace that

[89] *The Teheran Conference*, p. 164.

[90] For further details on Soivet-Japanese relations during the war, see below, pp. 480-483.

will follow".[91] The Conference showed that the calculations of fascist diplomacy that a split would develop between the allies were unfounded.

The Active Role of Soviet Diplomacy in Precipitating the Crisis Within the Fascist Bloc

In the summer of 1944, thanks to the Red Army's successful offensive the state frontier of the USSR was restored over a considerable part of its length. The Red Army then set about liberating the peoples of Europe from fascist oppression, bringing military operations to the territory of Germany itself and thus completing her defeat. Soviet foreign policy was now aimed at helping the liberated peoples to restore their national states on the basis of the right of nations to self-determination along with strict non-interference in their internal affairs. The policy of the Soviet government towards the liberated countries was determined by the liberating character of the Great Patriotic War and the socialist nature of the Soviet state. In liberating the European countries from the nazi occupying forces the Soviet Union was acting not only for the sake of its own national interests, its own security. It was consistently performing its international duty towards the peoples of Europe and the world. The Soviet Union embarked on the liberation of the European countries with a clear-cut programme. Its basic propositions had been proclaimed during the very first stages of the war. On November 6, 1941 the report delivered by J. V. Stalin on the anniversary of the October Revolution stated that "unlike Hitler Germany the Soviet Union and its allies are waging a war of liberation, a just war for the liberation of the enslaved peoples of Europe and the USSR from nazi tyranny". "It is not and cannot be our aim in this war," the report continued, "to impose our will or our regime on the Slav and other enslaved peoples of Europe who await our help. Our aim is to assist these peoples in their struggle for liberation from the nazi tyranny and then to provide the conditions for them to choose their own constitution freely on their own territory. There must be no interference in the internal affairs of other peoples! "[92]

In a statement made on behalf of the Soviet government at the Moscow conference of foreign ministers it was again emphasised that "the Soviet government regards it as one of the most important tasks of the postwar organisation of Europe and the achievement of lasting

[91] *United Nations Documents 1941-1945*, London, 1947, Royal Institute of International Affairs, p. 24.

[92] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. I, p. 49 (in Russian).

peace to liberate the small countries and restore their independence and sovereignty".[93] On May 13, 1944 the governments of the USSR, USA and Britain proposed to the governments of Hungary, Romania, Finland and Bulgaria that they should stop fighting on Germany's side.

In the spring of 1944 Soviet troops reached the state frontier between the USSR and Romania. In this connection the Soviet government issued a statement pointing out that the USSR "does not pursue the aim of acquiring any part of Romanian territory or changing the existing social system in Romania, and that the entry of Soviet troops into Romania is dictated exclusively by military necessity and the continuing resistance of the enemy forces".[94]

In 1944 the Red Army's offensive brought about a crisis in the fascist alliance. The crushing defeats which the Red Army had inflicted on the forces of the fascist coalition had sharply reduced Germany's military might. This created real opportunities for liberation of the peoples of the states that were in alliance with Germany.

Nazi Germany was oppressing its allies. It had reduced them to the status of rightless satellites. The defeats at the front caused a split among the countries participating in the fascist bloc, some of which had begun to think how they could get away in time from the sinking fascist ship. The local fascist and semi-fascist regimes were incurring ever greater hatred among the peoples of Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. The economic disruption and fascist oppression were making the position of the working people in these countries totally unbearable and a revolutionary situation was brewing. But the peoples could not count on success until the forces of the fascist aggressors had been crippled by the victories of the Red Army and until the Red Army was rearing the borders of the countries oppressed by the Germans.

After the Red Army's entry into Romania a popular uprising began in Bucharest on August 23. Relying on the victories of the Red Army, the Romanian workers led by the Communist Party overthrew Antonescu's fascist government, whereupon the king appointed a new government under General Sanatescu.

With the liberation of Romania the Red Army engaged the German forces concentrated on the territory of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government had not formally declared war on the USSR for fear of the explosion of indignation this would cause among its people, who had a deep affection for the Russian people and the Soviet state. But in practice the Bulgarian rulers were waging war against the USSR by helping nazi Germany. In September 1942 and in April 1944 the

[93] *The Moscow Conference*, p. 193.

[94] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. II, p. 105 (in Russian).

Soviet government had urged the Bulgarian government to stop the German armed forces using Bulgarian territory, aerodromes and ports for operations against the USSR and to agree to reopen the Soviet consulates in Ruse and Burgas that had been closed down. Bulgaria's monarchist government did not satisfy these demands. On May 18 it was warned that if it did not break with Germany the Soviet Union would be unable to maintain relations with it. On August 12 the Soviet government again urged Sofia to break off relations with Germany. Hitler's Bulgarian allies refused to give a clear answer to this demand and in practice continued to collaborate with Germany and secretly sought contacts with the United States and Britain. German troops continued to use Bulgarian territory. On September 5 the Soviet government declared that "not only is Bulgaria in a state of war with the USSR, inasmuch as it was formerly in a state of war with the USSR, but the Soviet Union will from now on also been in a state of war with Bulgaria". Scarcely had Soviet troops entered Bulgaria, on September 8, when a popular uprising took place (on September 9). The Communists marched in the vanguard of the masses and the Patriotic Front government was set up.

On August 25 the new government of Romania proposed to the allies that there should be an armistice. Early in September Bulgaria and Finland made similar proposals. As early as the beginning of 1944 the Soviet government had agreed to start negotiations on armistice terms with Germany's allies. The governments of the United States and Britain did the same. The negotiations led to the signing on September 12, 1944 of an armistice agreement with Romania, on September 19, with Finland, and on October 28, with Bulgaria. An armistice with Hungary was concluded on January 20, 1945. [95]

In negotiations with the USA and Britain on what armistice terms were to be sought the Soviet government defended the national interests of the Romanian, Bulgarian, Finnish and Hungarian peoples and their right to build their lives on democratic principles. Thanks to the efforts of the USSR the armistice agreements with Romania, Bulgaria, Finland and Hungary were both just and democratic. The agreements made it easier for the peoples of these countries to suppress the fascist elements and prevented any encroachment on their liberties by the imperialist elements of the United States and Britain, who were particularly anxious to gain control of Romania and her oil resources. The armistice agreement with the four countries contained provisions for the democratisation of their political and social life, including an article prohibiting all activities by fascist organisations. There was also an article providing for reparation of the great loss and injury inflicted on the peoples of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Poland and other countries as a result of the aggression by the states

[95] *History of Diplomacy*, Vol. IV, p. 456-77 (in Russian).

of the fascist bloc. However, the Soviet government, always true to the principles of internationalism, and guided by the desire to see the economy of the countries that had broken with nazi Germany restored as quickly as possible, restricted its demands to partial reparation of the losses inflicted on the Soviet Union.

The substance of the articles on territorial matters was that the frontiers between Romania, Bulgaria, Finland and Hungary and their neighbours should be just and equitable. The territorial provisions abolished the arbitrary frontiers imposed by nazi Germany.

Romania and Bulgaria immediately declared war on Germany. The Soviet Union welcomed the Romanian and Bulgarian peoples as allies and friends. Somewhat later Hungary and Finland also declared war on Germany.[96]

Since Finnish territory was not needed for military operations against Germany the Soviet government did not have to occupy this country. "It should be remembered," the outstanding Finnish statesman J. K. Paasikivi rightly stated, "that in the autumn of 1944, as in the winter of 1940, the Soviet Union could have continued the struggle by inflicting increasingly heavy defeats on Finland and could, if it had wished, have totally crushed Finland and destroyed its independence."[97]

In every country that the Red Army entered the Soviet government immediately handed over administrative powers to the local national authorities. This showed the Soviet Union's unchanging adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the liberated countries.

The USSR and the Liberation of the Countries Enslaved by Nazism

The Soviet Union played a decisive role in defeating nazi Germany and militarist Japan. The Soviet people and its Armed Forces led by the Communist Party defended the freedom and independence of their socialist Soviet country. The Land of Soviets honourably fulfilled its international duty. Its Red Army saved the peoples of Europe from the brown fascist plague. But this victory was won at great cost. More than 20 million Soviet people died during the Great Patriotic War. This was 40 per cent of all the human lives lost during the Second World War. More than three million fighting men of the

[96] On March 4, 1945, the Finnish government officially declared that Finland had been in a state of war with Germany since September 15, 1944 [*Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. III, p. 613 (in Russian)].

[97] J. K. Paasikivi, *The Paasikivi Line. Articles and Speeches, 1944-1956*, Moscow, 1958, p. 35 (Russ. ed.).

Soviet Armed Forces were listed killed, wounded or missing in the battles for the liberation of the peoples of Europe and Asia.[98] In the operations to liberate Romania, for example, Soviet losses amounted to 286,000 including 69,000 killed.[99] The struggle for the liberation of Czechoslovakia cost the lives of 140,000 Soviet soldiers.[100] Soviet losses during the liberation of Poland were even heavier: 600,000 Soviet soldiers were killed on Polish soil.[101]

The Soviet Armed Forces suffered substantial losses in liberating other countries too, but enough has been said to show the decisive role played by the USSR in liberating the peoples of Europe and Asia.

At the same time, despite the tremendous strain and incredible hardships caused by the great expenditure on the war and the loss of economically vital territories that had been occupied by the enemy the Soviet Union rendered the liberated peoples great material assistance. It supplied them with free grain for feeding their populations and sowing their fields and other essential goods, also free of charge, although the Soviet people had to deny themselves much that they badly needed.

The documents released in 1975[102] contain numerous facts and data on the assistance given by the Soviet people to the peoples of a number of European countries in building up their own military units and formations on the territory of the USSR.

Ever since 1941, in accordance with inter-governmental agreements and in response to the appeals of the military commands or the competent anti-fascist organisations of various countries, the USSR had been helping to set up on Soviet territory foreign military units and formations that later took part in operations. For example, in December 1941 steps were taken to organise a Czechoslovak infantry battalion and other Czechoslovak military units and formations. In 1942 under an agreement between the command of the Red Army and Fighting France a French air squadron was set up in the USSR, to be followed in 1943 by the Normandie air regiment. In response to a request from Polish patriots in the spring of 1943 the Soviet government helped them to form a division named after Thaddeus Kościuszko. Later, other Polish military units were set up. In 1943-1944, Romanian prisoners of war who wished to take part in the struggle against the nazi Wehrmacht were allowed to form the 1st Romanian infantry division named after Tudor Vladimirescu. At the request of Yugoslav

[98] *The Liberating Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Second World War*, Second Ed., Moscow, 1974, pp. 7-8 (in Russian).

[99] Ibid., p. 174.

[100] Ibid., p. 358-59.

[101] Ibid., p. 122.

[102] *Kommunist*, No. 6, 1975, pp. 39-41, and *Kommunist*, No. 7, 1975, pp. 45-55.

patriots Yugoslav military units began to be formed on Soviet territory at the end of 1943.

The recently published documents show that up to January 1, 1945 the Soviet Union spent over 723 million rubles[103] on the maintenance of Polish military units. The total cost in money and materials for the maintenance of Romanian military formations up to November 1944 amounted to over 31 million rubles,[104] and on Yugoslav formations (as of January 1, 1945) over 52 million rubles were spent.

The USSR also rendered military assistance to the armed forces of Albania in response to a request from its government. It helped it to fit out 3 Albanian mountain infantry divisions by supplying artillery equipment, motor transport and other technical military items, and also helped to train personnel for the Albanian army in Soviet military training establishments.[105]

The Soviet Union gave generous and manifold assistance to the people's armies of Albania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary. Through the central agencies of the USSR Ministry of Defence alone, not counting the fronts, 670,000 rifles and submachine guns, 16,500 guns and mortars, about 1,000 tanks and self-propelled artillery pieces, more than 1,600 aircraft, 12,397 lorries and 4,769 radio stations were transferred to the armies of these countries before the end of the war. The French Normandie air regiment received more than 100 aircraft.[106] The victories of the Red Army and its advance towards the borders of Yugoslavia enhanced the successes of the Yugoslav People's Liberation Army. Without the weakening of Germany that followed the victories of the Red Army the Yugoslav People's Liberation Army, valiant though it was, would have found it difficult if not impossible to liberate its country.

The Soviet Union was warmly in sympathy with the Yugoslav partisans led by the Communists under Josip Broz-Tito from the very beginning of the movement and gave the Yugoslav partisans every possible assistance. The Soviet Union's fundamental attitude to the liberation movement of the peoples of Yugoslavia was officially and publicly expressed, for example, in a statement issued by the Informbureau of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on December 14, 1943. This statement was made in connection with the decisions of the second session of the Anti-Fascist Veche of the People's Resistance. The Veche passed a resolution on the creation of a Yugoslav democratic federative state, the formation of a national committee of liberation led by J. B. Tito and the stripping of the

[103] *Kommunist*, No. 6, 1975, p. 47.

[104] *Kommunist*, No. 7, 1975, p. 46.

[105] Ibid., pp. 53-54.

[106] *The Liberating Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Second World War*, p. 455 (in Russian).

Yugoslav monarchist émigré government of its powers. The statement made by the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs declared that the government of the USSR took positive view of these important events. They were regarded as "promoting the further successful struggle of the Yugoslav peoples against nazi Germany. They also testified to the substantial success of the new leaders of Yugoslavia in the work of uniting all the national forces".[107] A Soviet military mission was sent to Yugoslavia in March 1944. Its task was to help coordinate the operations of Yugoslav and Soviet troops and find ways for the USSR to assist Yugoslavia. The Soviet air force flew in some essential supplies for the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia. Other assistance was also given. On June 5, 1944, in a letter to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs Marshal Tito thanked the Soviet government for its assistance, both material and diplomatic.

The governments of the United States and Britain, on the contrary, continued for a long time to support the King of Yugoslavia and his government, who were living in emigration at the expense of Britain. In Yugoslavia itself they backed the reactionary General Draza Mihajlovič and his *chetniks,* who presented themselves as fighters against the German aggressors but were, in fact, fighting the partisans and trying to prevent power from passing to the democratic forces after Germany's defeat. The British government with the full support of the US government tried to restore the Yugoslav monarchy and take power away from the people. Besides supporting the partisans and the People's Liberation Army, the Soviet side took steps to prevent the Anglo-American policy of interference and diktat being put into effect. The Soviet government rebuffed the claims of Britain and the United States designed to strengthen reaction in Yugoslavia and spread the influence of British and American imperialism. Conflict over this question reached a new peak during the Soviet-British negotiations in October 1944 at the time of Churchill's visit to Moscow.

Upholding the interests of the peoples of all the Balkan countries, including those of Yugoslavia, the Soviet government in its negotiations with Churchill rejected the proposal for a sharing of influence between Britain and the USSR in Yugoslavia and other Balkan countries. Churchill's belated attempt to prove the opposite in his memoirs does not correspond to the truth. The communiqué on the Soviet-British negotiations stated: "The two Governments agreed to pursue a joint policy in Yugoslavia designed to concentrate all energies against the retreating Germans and bring about a solution of Yugoslav internal difficulties by a union between the Royal Yugoslav Government and the National Liberation movement.

"The right of the Yugoslav people to settle their future Constitution for themselves after the war is of course recognised as

[107] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. I., p. 436.

inalienable."[108]

On November 1 agreement was reached between Marshal Tito and the Prime Minister of the monarchist government Šubašič on the creation of a coalition government. It was agreed that the question of the country's future Constitution would be decided after the war by the people by means of a nationwide plebiscite. Up till then the king had been deprived of the right to return to the country. The king dismissed Šubašič and with the support of the British government, the émigré government sabotaged the agreement.

On November 25, 1944, the Soviet government publicly announced its approval of the Tito-Šubašič agreement.

Despite the hardships that the Soviet Union itself had to endure the Soviet government gave the Yugoslav national liberation movement economic assistance as well as military and political support throughout the liberation struggle waged by the peoples of Yugoslavia. After the liberation of Belgrade, for example, the USSR provided 3.3 million poods of grain and grain products for the starving population of the Yugoslav capital. The USSR continuously helped the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia with weapons, ammunition and other supplies.

As the Red Army advanced the hour of Poland's liberation drew nearer.

The Soviet government did everything possible to help the Polish liberation movement. In complete contrast to this was the policy of the Western powers, which through the London émigré government made every effort to block the development of the Polish people's armed struggle against the nazi occupation forces.

The Polish Communists (the Polish Workers' Party) were in the front ranks of the fighters for the liberation of their country. Under its leadership the armed struggle against the occupation forces grew and expanded and a national anti-fascist front gradually came into being.

From February 1943 the League of Polish Patriots formed on the initiative of the Communists and other democratic public figures developed a big campaign to unite the Polish democratic émigrés.

The Soviet government gave the League of Polish Patriots all-round help and support.

A statement by the Soviet government of January 11, 1944 declared its intention of building close friendship with Poland "on the basis of stable good-neighbourly relations and mutual respect and, if the Polish people so desires, on the basis of a mutual assistance alliance...."[109]

[108] *Documents on American Foreign Relations*, Vol. VII, July 1944-June 1945, Princeton University Press, 1947, p. 348.

[109] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. II, p. 60.

In the course of the Polish people's struggle against the German aggressors a new truly popular national government the Krajowa Rada Narodowa—emerged in Poland. Very friendly relations were soon established between the Rada, the Polish Committee of National Liberation (PCNL), set up on July 21, 1944[110] and the Soviet Union. The Soviet government regarded the new organs of power, in the shape they had taken in the crucible of the popular liberation war, as representing Poland.

The position of the United States and Britain was quite different. They sought to change the composition of the new organs of power and not only in Poland but also in other liberated countries (including, for example, France) and bring them under their control. The United States and Britain intended to instal in Poland an émigré reactionary government that would depend entirely on them. This was the crux of the disagreements that arose between the USSR, the USA and Britain on the Polish question in the last stage of the war. The USSR recognised the people's power that had drawn up on Polish soil. The USA and Britain intended to interfere in the internal affairs of the Polish people in order to change the character of that power.

The ruling circles of the United States and Britain ignored the fact that the émigré government was hindering the common struggle against nazi Germany, blocking operations by the Red Army, using its underground espionage and sabotage agents against the Soviet forces and virtually helping the nazis. Both Western powers stubbornly attempted to bring these bankrupt reactionaries to power.

In June-July 1944 the Red Army with units of the Wojsko Polskie serving in it crossed into the territory of Poland amid heavy fighting. A statement by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs issued on July 26, 1944 declared that the Soviet government's aim was to "rout the opposing German armies and help the Polish people in its liberation from the oppression of the German aggressors and restoration of an independent, strong and democratic Poland."[111]

On the same day an agreement was signed between the Soviet government and the Polish Committee of National Liberation on relations to be maintained between the Soviet Commander-in-Chief and the Polish administration after Soviet troops entered Polish territory. The Soviet government recognised the authority of the PCNL throughout the territory of Poland that had been liberated from the enemy. Permanent contact was established between the Soviet government and the PCNL, and a Soviet government represen-

[110] The PCNL was created as a temporary executive organ of the Krajowa Rada Narodowa. The latter was the political representation of the Polish people designed "to speak on behalf of the people and guide its destinies until the liberation of Poland from occupation" [See *History of Poland*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1958, p. 608 (in Russian)].

[111] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. II, p. 155.

tation was set up with the PCNL, which was based in Lublin.

Representatives of the Polish émigré government headed by its new leader Mikolajczyk attempted to discuss Polish questions with the Soviet government. But they were told to address themselves to the PCNL.

In August and October 1944 negotiations took place in Moscow between PCNL representatives and representatives of the Polish émigré government. Stalin and Churchill, during his October visit to Moscow, participated in these negotiations. The Polish émigré government repudiated democratic changes in Poland and intended to restore the reactionary constitution, the power of the landowners and capitalists. Nor did it recognise the Curzon line. This émigré clique based in London demanded return of their power over extensive Ukrainian and Byelorussian territories. When it realised that there was no hope of achieving these expansionist plans, the émigré government reduced its claims but continued to demand the capital of Lithuania Vilnius and the Ukrainian city of Lvov.[112] Both the Committee of National Liberation and the Soviet government rejected these claims, which ran counter to the principle of nationality.

When the Committee by decision of the Krajowa Rada Narodowa was transformed into the Provisional Government of Poland, it was immediately recognised by the USSR. This happened on January 4, 1945.

In October 1944, in order to ease Poland's difficult economic situation the Soviet Union agreed to help in providing Poland with certain basic raw materials.

The Soviet Army went on to liberate Czechoslovakia. Here, too, the USSR pursued a policy of non-intervention in internal affairs and development of friendly relations.

As early as December 12, 1943, the USSR and the government of Czechoslovakia signed a treaty of friendship, mutual assistance and postwar collaboration. It contained the mutual obligation "to render each other military and other assistance" in the war against Germany and her allies in Europe and not to conclude any armistice or peace with them except by mutual agreement. The treaty also made it obligatory for both sides to help each other with military and other support in the postwar period in the event of either side being drawn into military operations against Germany or any other state allied with Germany directly or in any other form in such a war. The sides agreed to work in close cooperation after the war on the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and non-intervention in internal affairs. Another clause specified that no side should take part in any coalition directed against the other side.

In 1943 a Czechoslovak battalion, which soon grew into a brigade,

[112] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, pp. 297, 309, 312.

and then a corps, began to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army. The assistance which the Soviet Union gave to the Slovak people's uprising in 1944 and the participation of Soviet partisans in that uprising were an expression of the fraternal friendship and military cooperation between the peoples of the USSR and Czechoslovakia.

Just as in Poland, a national government was restored to power immediately after the liberation of Czechoslovak territory from the German aggressors. Under the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement of May 8, 1944 the Czechoslovak territory liberated by the Red Army came under the sovereign administration of the Czechoslovak government and public bodies as soon as it ceased to be a zone of direct military operations. The formation, composition and character of these bodies were exclusively the concern of the government of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The defeat of nazism by the Red Army and the overthrow of the fascist and pro-fascist regimes in a number of European countries unleashed democratic forces. The revolutionary processes in the countries of Eastern Europe constituted a major blow to the capitalist system and the interests of the imperialist powers. This was why the governments of the United States and Britain made every effort to prevent the development of revolution, especially as it was also gaining ground in the countries liberated by the troops of the Western powers.

A vivid example of this was Greece, where the revolutionary wave was running particularly high. The British troops that had landed in Greece in the autumn of 1944 ruthlessly suppressed the Greek patriots and restored the anti-popular monarchist regime by force of arms.

In Italy the presence of numerous American and British troops was an obstacle to the rapidly growing revolutionary activity of the mass of the people and prevented an open revolutionary explosion.

The opening of the second front in France, which finally took place on June 6, 1944 with the landing of allied troops in Normandy, may be attributed above all to the desire of the United States and Britain to occupy as much of Europe as possible. The American and British governments did not want to see Europe liberated either by the forces of the Red Army or by the forces of the peoples who had been enslaved by the nazis. The USA and Britain intended to build up a dominating position for the Western imperialist powers over as much as possible of the European continent.

The expulsion of the nazi aggressors form French territory was used by the Western powers for the purpose of occupying France with American and British troops. The governments of Britain and the USA intended to set up their own occupation regime in France. They did everything possible to prevent the French Committee of National Liberation from taking an active part in preparations for the second

front in Northern France. They were even more negative in their attitude to the liberation movement of the French people and its local organisations in France itself. After British and American troops had landed in France the Allied Supreme Command did not try to make contact with the Resistance Movement, gave it no support and, on the contrary, tried in every way to disorganise it and bring it to an end as soon as possible.

The Soviet government's position in relation to France and the French Resistance fighters was quite different and stemmed from a desire to render all-round assistance to the French people in their liberation struggle, and to restore the independence and sovereignty of France and, what was more, her position as a great power.

Fighting cooperation between the Soviet and French people spread and strengthened in the course of the war. The French air regiment Normandie-Nieman fought successfully together with Soviet pilots on the Soviet-German front. Many of its airmen were decorated by the Soviet government for bravery and exemplary performance of combat operations. In their turn many Soviet citizens who had been forcibly deported by the nazis and ended up in France after escaping from nazi captivity took an active part in the French people's heroic struggle against the German occupation forces.

In pursuing a policy designed to bring about the liberation of France and its restoration as an independent state the Soviet government decided to recognise the French Committee of National Liberation (FCNL) led by General de Gaulle.

On this point a serious conflict arose between the Soviet government and its allies. On June 23, 1943, Churchill sent Stalin a message protesting against this step. He wrote that he was worried by the news of the Soviet government's intention to recognise the FCNL. "It is unlikely that the British, and still more that the United States Government, will recognise this Committee for some time...." Churchill wrote that it was not clear to him how de Gaulle would act if he came to power in France. The British Premier let it be understood that the USA and Britain would take steps to change the composition of the FCNL in the direction they desired. In France, as in Yugoslavia and Poland, Britain and the United States tried to bring about changes in the governments so as to manoeuvre their own people into power.

The United States took an even more hostile position towards the FCNL and de Gaulle personally than did Britain. For a long time it maintained contact with the Vichy government consisting of Hitler's puppets and tried to build up other figures in the Resistance movement in opposition to de Gaulle. On the evidence of Anthony Eden, Roosevelt's closest adviser Admiral Leahy tried to persuade the President "that Marshal Pétain was the most reliable person to whom the Allies could look for help in rallying the French when the Allied

troops entered France".[113]

But the Soviet government did not abandon its policy of promoting the restoration of French sovereignty and recognition of the FCNL. The Committee by this time enjoyed the support of very broad circles of the French people and was obliged to cooperate to some extent with the progressive forces in France. On August 26, 1943, the Soviet government recognised the FCNL, as the representative of the state interests of the French Republic and expressed its readiness to exchange plenipotentiary representatives with it. When the FCNL became the Provisional Government of the French Republic, the Soviet government recognised it without delay, on October 23, 1944. The Soviet Union's continuing friendly relationship towards France was stressed in a published statement. While the war was still going on de Gaulle correctly assessed the role of the Soviet Union in the defeat of nazism and the importance for France of close cooperation with the USSR in the postwar period in organising European security. Evidence of this is to be found in the speech he made to the Consultative Assembly on July 25, 1944. "I would add," de Gaulle emphasised, "that the very favourable position taken for so long towards us by the government of the Soviet Union, whose role in the war is today of capital importance as it will be tomorrow in the peace, gives us grounds to hope that France and Russia will, as soon as possible, establish between them the forms of close collaboration on which, so I believe, the future security and equilibrium of Europe depend."[114] De Gaulle was guided by these ideas when he conducted negotiations in Moscow in December 1944 after being invited there by the Soviet government.

The question of ensuring mutual assistance against German aggression was central to the Soviet-French negotiations. Concerning France's defeat in 1940 de Gaulle stated that the fact that "France was not with Russia, had no agreement with her, no effective treaty", had been one of the main reasons for this defeat.[115] He maintained that there were three ways of preventing German aggression: the redrawing of the German frontiers, German disarmament and the creation of alliances against her. The treaty of alliance and mutual assistance signed in Moscow on December 10, 1944[116] served the further development of Soviet-French cooperation. This treaty

[113] *The Memoirs of Anthony Eden—Earl of Avon. The Reckoning*, Cambridge, 1965, p. 519.

[114] Charles de Gaulle, *Memoires de Guerre. L'unité 1942-1944*, Paris, 1956, p. 586.

[115] *Soviet-French Relations During the Great Patriotic War, 1941-1945*, Moscow, 1959, p. 340 (in Russian).

[116] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. II, pp. 327-30.

specifically proclaimed the determination of both states after the end of the war with Germany "to take jointly all necessary measures for the elimination of any new threat coming from Germany, and to obstruct such actions as would make possible any new attempt at aggression on her part".

The treaty stated that in the event of either of the contracting parties finding itself involved in military operations against Germany the other party should at once render it every aid and assistance within its power. It also contained a commitment to develop all-round cooperation in the postwar period.

The peoples of both countries applauded the conclusion of this alliance between the USSR and France, which was in the interests of both states, the demands of the war and the needs of peace.

The Crimea Conference

The Red Army's offensive had created favourable conditions for allied operations in Western Europe. Nevertheless by the winter of 1944-1945 the allies' offensive came to a standstill. The allied armies found themselves in a particularly difficult position at the end of December 1944, when the nazi command launched a big counter-offensive on the Western Front in the Ardennes and the German forces achieved considerable successes.

According to information supplied by British and American intelligence the Germans were planning to strike at Liège, to smash the First American Army, break through to Antwerp, isolate the three allied armies and bring about a fresh Dunkerque. In great alarm Churchill appealed to the Soviet Union for help. In his message of January 6, 1945 he wrote to the head of the Soviet government: "The battle in the West is very heavy and, at any time, large decisions may be called for from the Supreme Command. You know yourself from your own experience how very anxious the position is when a very broad front has to be defended after temporary loss of the initiative." Churchill asked to be informed, "... whether we can count on a major Russian offensive on the Vistula front, or elsewhere, during January...."[117]

Churchill's message was received in Moscow on January 7. The reply was given on the same day. It stated that the Soviet Union was preparing for an offensive, but the weather was not favourable for active operations. "Still, in view of our Allies' position on the Western Front," the reply stated, "GHO of the Supreme Command have decided to complete preparations at a rapid rate and, regardless of weather, to launch large-scale offensive operations along the entire

[117] *Correspondence...*, Vol. I, p. 294.

Central Front not later than the second half of January. Rest assured we shall do all in our power to support the valiant forces of our Allies."[118] The British Premier was delighted by this message. In reply he wrote to Stalin on January 9, 1945: "I am most grateful to you for your thrilling message. I have sent it over to General Eisenhower for his eye only. May all good fortune rest upon your noble venture."[119]

To help the allies the Soviet government brought forward the date for the launching of their offensive and on January 12 a massive offensive of 150 Soviet divisions began along a broad front from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathians. Soviet troops broke through strong German defences and made big advances westward.

The nazi command was compelled to transfer two panzer armies from the Western to the Eastern Front. This checked the German offensive in the West. On January 17, 1945 the British Prime Minister wrote to the head of the Soviet government: "On behalf of His Majesty's Government, and from the bottom of my heart, I offer you our thanks and congratulations on the immense assault you have launched upon the Eastern Front."[120]

The Red Army's massive offensive allowed our allies not only to beat off the German attacks but also to renew offensive operations themselves. The Soviet Union and the Red Army showed an example of what they meant by performing their duty as allies: they came to the help of their ally when he was in danger.

The Red Army's successes and the new balance of forces on the international scene created favourable conditions for the activities of Soviet diplomacy at the Crimea Conference. This was the second meeting of heads of government of the three great powers of the anti-Hitler coalition.

The conference took place in Livadia, near Yalta, from February 4 to 11, 1945. It considered in detail the position at the fronts and mapped out further perspectives for military operations against Germany. Churchill still cherished the idea of Anglo-American occupation not only of Western but possibly a great part of Central and Southeast Europe. He was determined to stop the further westward advance of the Red Army by every means. On the way to the Crimea he met President Roosevelt in Malta and had talks with him. As the American record of the Malta talks shows, Churchill attached great importance to getting the German armed forces out of Italy as soon as possible or their immediate surrender. "He felt it was essential that we should occupy as much of Austria as possible as it was undesirable that more of Western Europe than necessary should be

[118] Ibid., p. 297.
[119] Ibid., p. 301.
[120] Ibid., p. 301.

occupied by the Russians."[121]

At the Crimea Conference the heads of the three delegations agreed on how the terms of unconditional surrender for nazi Germany should be forcibly applied. They outlined the principles of a coordinated policy towards Germany based on the principles of its democratisation and demilitarisation. It was reaffirmed that in accordance with the plan agreed upon in the European Advisory Commission Germany should be occupied by the armies of the victors and that it should be placed under the control of the three allied powers. The aim of the occupation and allied control was declared to be "the destruction of German militarism and nazism and the creation of guarantees that Germany would never again be capable of violating peace". The allied powers declared their readiness to disarm and disband all German armed forces, to liquidate the general staff, to confiscate or destroy all German military equipment, to liquidate or take under their control all German industry that could be used for military production; to subject all war criminals to just and rapid punishment; to eradicate all nazi and military influence from public institutions and the cultural and economic life of the German people, and also to take joint and other measures that might prove necessary for future peace and the security of all peoples. The participants in the conference solemnly declared that their aims did not include the destruction of the German people. But they affirmed that "only when nazism and militarism are eradicated will there be any hope of a worthy existence for the German people and of a place for it in the community of nations".[122]

In the decisions of the Crimea Conference the heads of government of the three powers endorsed the documents drawn up by the European Advisory Commission On Zones of Occupation in Germany and the Administration of Greater Berlin and On Control Machinery in Germany.[123] The first of these documents set forth the agreement on Germany being divided into three zones of occupation which would be taken over by the troops of the three powers, and defined the borders of these zones.

Under the Agreement on Control Machinery in Germany the supreme authority during the period of occupation was to be exercised by the Commanders-in-Chief of the armed forces of the USSR, the United States and the United Kingdom, each in his own zone of occupation on instructions from their respective governments. On questions concerning Germany as a whole the Commanders-in-Chief

[121] *Foreign Relations of the United States. Diplomatic Papers. The Conferences at Malta and Yalta. 1945*, Washington, 1955, p. 543.

[122] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. III, p. 103.

[123] *Foreign Relations of the United States... The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 118.

should act jointly as members of the Allied Control Council for Germany.

The United States and Great Britain had for a long time taken a hostile attitude towards the French Committee of National Liberation which was reconstituted later as a provisional government of France and towards de Gaulle personally because they thought that after the war France would become a second-rate power depending on them politically and economically. They were opposed therefore to admitting it on an equal footing to their number.

However, in view of their plans for an anti-Soviet Western bloc, in which France was to play a significant role, the British and American governments decided to revise the decisions adopted by the European Advisory Commission and allocate an occupation zone and a seat in the Control Council for Germany to a fourth power—France. The Western allies were also prompted to review their attitude towards France by the fact that on December 10, 1944 the USSR and France signed a treaty of alliance and mutual assistance which significantly enhanced the international standing of France. On February 4, 1945 in a conversation with Stalin in Livadia Roosevelt said that "the question of granting France a zone of occupation in Germany should be discussed at the present conference. Of course, he added, it was only a question of being polite to the French."[124] The American President admitted that he "had previously been against France taking part in the Control Council in Germany", but had later changed his opinion. During the discussion of this question the head of the Soviet delegation declared "that he had no objection to the French participating in the Control Council, and that he favoured their joining in the Declaration".[125] It was decided at the conference that France should be given a zone in Germany to be occupied by French troops. This zone should be formed out of parts of the British and American zones. It was also decided that the French Provisional Government should be invited to send its representative to the Control Council for Germany.

The passing of decisions in the Control Council demaded unanimity on the part of all four members. Its function was to ensure coordinated action by the Commanders-in-Chief in their respective zones, to work out joint decisions on military, political, economic and other matters that were of general concern for Germany as a whole, to control the activities of the Central German Administration (if it had been set up), and to guide the inter-allied commandants' office of Greater Berlin.

[124] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR Stalin and US President Roosevelt, Livadia, 4 February 1945 (in Russian).

[125] *International Affairs*, No. 8, 1965, p. 113.

Under the inter-allied agreements drawn up by the European Advisory Commission the whole of Greater Berlin became part of the Eastern, i.e., Soviet zone. During military operations Berlin had been liberated by the Red Army and up to July 4, 1945 was administered by a Soviet commandant, on whose orders a German magistracy of Greater Berlin was set up on May 6, 1945. British and American troops did not enter Berlin until July 4, followed by French troops on August 12. The agreement on Zones of Occupation in Germany and the Administration of Greater Berlin envisaged that the whole Eastern Zone should be occupied by Soviet troops with the exception of Berlin. Inasmuch as Berlin was the seat of the Control Council (and precisely for this reason) it was to be occupied by troops of all four powers. The administration of Greater Berlin was to be exercised by the inter-allied commandants' office, but agreement did not vest supreme power in this office and its activities were subordinated to the Control Council. The agreement on Zones of Occupation in Germany and the Administration of Greater Berlin did not give the Western powers any special rights of access to Berlin. The American diplomat and intelligence officer Robert Murphy, who took part in the negotiations on the American side, states in his memoirs that he tried to get his government to stipulate such rights under the agreement but was given no support.[126] Nor did the Crimea Conference, which endorsed the agreement drawn up by the EAC, grant the USA, Britain or France any "rights" of access to Berlin.

The agreement On Control Machinery laid it down that the Control Council and other allied agencies for the control and administration of Germany "will operate during the initial period of the occupation of Germany immediately following surrender, that is, the period when Germany is carrying out the basic requirements of unconditional surrender".[127]

The next question considered at the conference in connection with the discussion of the German problem was that of the reparations to be made by Germany. The losses suffered by the USSR were defined by the Extraordinary State Commission, which was made up of prominent Soviet public men.

The Soviet Union had suffered huge, unprecedented losses of human life, totalling about 20 million people killed.[128] Throughout human history no country had ever suffered such losses. The nazi aggressors and their satellites had completely or partially destroyed and burned 1,710 cities and more than 70,000 villages; they had

[126] R. Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors*, New York, 1964, p. 231.

[127] *Foreign Relations of the United States... The Conferences at Malta and Yalta*, p. 127.

[128] *National Economy of the USSR in 1961*, Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, 1962, p. 8; *USSR in Figures in 1963*, Brief Statistical Collection, Moscow, 1964, p. 11 (both in Russian).

burned and destroyed more than 6 million buildings and made about 25 million people homeless; they had destroyed 31,850 industrial enterprises, 65,000km of railway track and 4,100 railway stations; they had ruined and plundered 98,000 collective farms, 1,876 state farms and 2,890 machine and tractor stations; they had killed, commandered or driven away to Germany 7 million horses, 17 million head of cattle, 20 million pigs, and 27 million sheep and goats.[129] The direct damage to the Soviet Union caused by Germany and her allies on the territory they had occupied amounted to 679 billion rubles.[130] The total damage, taking into account military expenditure and loss of income from the national economy of the occupied areas, amounted to the colossal sum of 2,569 billion rubles.[131]

The Soviet government demanded that Germany should at least in part make good this enormous material damage. But at the same time the Soviet Union opposed the economic enslavement of Germany and in defining the amounts and forms of payment of reparations took into consideration not only the interests of the USSR but also the position of Germany and the interests of the German people. On February 5, 1945 the Soviet delegation expounded its plan for reparations from Germany at the conference and stated: "...in working out its reparations plan, the Soviet Government had always had in mind the creation of conditions in which the German people in the postwar years could exist on the basis of the average European living standard...."[132]

The conference recognised it as just that Germany should restore in kind as much as possible of the damage it had caused. The heads of the three governments agreed that reparations should be taken from Germany in three forms: by acts of confiscation during two years after the surrender of Germany from its national wealth (moreover, these confiscations should be made mainly with the aim of destroying Germany's war potential), by annual deliveries of commodities from current production, and also by the use of German labour.[133]

An International Reparations Commission comprised of representatives of the USSR, USA and Great Britain was set up in Moscow to work out a detailed reparations plan on the basis of the above-mentioned principles.

Regarding the total sum of reparations from Germany and also their distribution among the countries that had suffered from German

[129] *Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union, 1945. Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1949, p. 36 (in Russian).

[130] Ibid., p. 37.

[131] *Pravda*, September 24, 1958.

[132] *International Affairs*, No. 6, 1965, p. 102.

[133] *A Collection of Treaties, Agreements and Conventions...*, Issue XI, p. 7778.

aggression, the Soviet and American delegations agreed upon the following: "The Moscow Reparations Commission should take in its initial studies as a basis for discussion the suggestion of the Soviet government that the total sum of the reparations ... should be 20 billion dollars and that 50 per cent of it should go to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." This was agreed upon by the Soviet and American governments. However, the British delegation at the Crimea Conference did not support this proposal and stated that the British government reserved the right to return to the question of assessing the sum of reparations in the course of the work of the Reparations Commission. The US government later refused to support the agreement it had given previously to the sum of just reparation demands presented by the Soviet Union.

At the conference various proposals on the division of Germany into several states were again discussed.

By this time the Western powers had drawn up new plans for the dismemberment of Germany. In 1944 proposals on the dismemberment of Germany into three states—east, west, and south—were published under the signature of the US Secretary of State Welles. On the assumption that the German people would resist the liquidation of the united German state, Welles proposed that the dismemberment should be carried out by force.[134]

Another plan for the dismemberment of Germany was drafted on the special instructions of President Roosevelt by one of his closest associates Henry Morgenthau Jr., the Secretary of the Treasury. This plan was considered and passed by the so-called government committee on German questions. According to this plan, the Saar and adjoining territories between the Mozel and the Rhine should go to France; the Ruhr, the Rhine land, the Kiel Canal and lands to the north of it were to become an international zone and be administered by an "international body". The remainder of Germany was to be divided into two "autonomous states": the North German State, that was to include Prussia, Saxony, Thuringen, and the South German State consisting of Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, etc. The latter, according to Morgenthau, was to have a tariff union with Austria.

Besides the dismemberment of Germany this plan envisaged the liquidation of a large part of German industry and turning Germany into an agrarian country. This would have condemned substantial numbers of the German people to a life below the subsistence level.

In January 1944 the British government proposed that the dismemberment of Germany should be studied by the EAC.

At the second EAC session, on January 26, 1944, the British representative Strang stated that he believed it desirable to begin a study of the question of German dismemberment as soon as possible

[134] S. Welles, *The Time for Decision*, New York-London, 1945, p. 351.

and proposed setting up a special committee for the dismemberment of Germany.[135]

Strang also submitted a draft of the statute for such a committee.

At the third EAC session in February 1944, when the British draft was being considered, the Soviet representative F.T.Gusev stated that he was "not prepared to instruct any member of his delegation to join in the work of studying it".[136]

The EAC decided to postpone discussion of this question to another session, but the question of the dismemberment of Germany was not raised again at EAC sessions throughout 1944.

The question was brought up at the second Anglo-American conference in Quebec in September 1944, where Roosevelt and Churchill approved the Morgenthau plan.

At the Crimea Conference the leaders of the American and British governments again came out in favour of German dismemberment. "Roosevelt believed," the Soviet record of the conference states, "it would be well to present the Germans with the terms of surrender and, in addition, to tell them that Germany was to be dismembered".[137] After an exchange of opinion on this question the decision was taken to set up a special commission on Germany, which would also discuss dismemberment.

At a session of the dismemberment commission on March 7, 1945 the Soviet representative stated that the question of dismemberment was being studied by Soviet experts.

Replying to Winant's question on whether the allies wanted a democratic Germany, Gusev said that the commission had a perfectly clear task—"to draw up a concrete plan for a territorial organisation of Germany that would not allow the Germans to rebuild their military potential and that would forever remove the danger of any future German aggression".[138]

Eden and Winant agreed that the approach to the problem outlined by the Soviet representative was correct.

On March 9, 1945 the British representative on this commission sent the Soviet representative a draft directive providing for consideration by the commission of the question of "how Germany should be divided, into what parts, within what frontiers and what the relations should be between the parts". The Soviet Union reaffirmed its negative attitude towards the proposal for the dismemberment of Germany. On March 26, 1945, the Soviet representative in the commission, F. T. Gusev, gave the following answer: "The Soviet government

[135] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. European Consultative Commission. Minutes, January 26, 1944.

[136] Ibid., February 15, 1944.

[137] *International Affairs*, No. 6, 1965, p. 98.

[138] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Telegram from F. T. Gusev to People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, March 8, 1945.

accepts the plan for the dismemberment of Germany not as a mandatory plan but only as a possible way of pressuring Germany in order to render her harmless should other means prove insufficient." Some time later Eden initiated a fresh session of the commission for the dismemberment of Germany at which he read out this letter from the Soviet representative. During an exchange of opinion the British and American representatives stated that their governments agreed with the Soviet understanding of the question. Thus it was thanks to the Soviet Union that the question of the dismemberment of Germany was removed from the agenda of inter-allied negotiations.[139]

The Soviet delegation noticed that the American and, particularly, British delegations which initiated the plan for the dismemberment of Germany began to revise their stand. The US and British governments regarded Germany as above all their imperialist rival, and dangerous competitor on the world market, and sought to weaken it as much as they could. However, there was another aspect of the German question for Anglo-American imperialism—the possibility of using Germany for anti-Soviet purposes in future. In this context the plans of complete deindustrialisation and dismemberment of Germany lost their value for the Western countries. For instance Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff of Great Britain, favoured the reconstruction of Germany and its incorporation in the West European Alliance in view of the proving Soviet political and military might.[140]

The Crimea Conference paid a great deal of attention to the Polish question. The head of the Soviet delegation Stalin stated that the Soviet Union had a stake in creating a powerful, free and independent Poland.[141] Discussion centred both on the future borders of Poland and the composition of the Polish government.

It was decided that the Soviet-Polish border should be drawn in accordance with ethnic principles, that is, basically along the so-called "Curzon line", deviating from it in some areas to a distance of between 5 and 8 km in favour of Poland.

No serious differences arose between the conference participants over recognition of the need for territorial acquisitions in Poland's favour in the north and west. But there were differences about the size of these acquisitions. The Soviet delegation proposed drawing Poland's western border along the Oder and the Western Neisse. This proposal was disputed by the American and British representatives,

139 *The Truth About the Policy of the Western Powers on the German Question*, Moscow, 1959, p. 13 (in Russian). The British Draft of the Commission's Directive and the Soviet Reply are published in the magazine *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn*, No. 5, 1955, p. 44.

140 A. Bryant, *Triumph in the West. 1943-1946*. Based on the Diaries and Autobiographical Notes of Field Marshal the Viscount Alan Brooke, London, 1959, p. 242.

141 *International Affairs*, No. 6, 1965, p. 108.

who alleged that the Polish people would not be able to develop the resources of this territory. After an exchange of opinion on this question it was decided that Poland should receive a substantial addition of territory in the north and the west, the size of which would be established later.

An intense political struggle flared up over the question of the Polish government. The United States and Britain were still maintaining diplomatic relations with the reactionary Polish émigré government in London, which had adopted a hostile position towards the USSR, was isolated from Poland and did not represent the Polish people. The Soviet Union recognised the Provisional Polish Government that had been created on democratic principles in Poland itself and enjoyed the support of the broad masses of the Polish people.

At the start of the conference the American and British delegations tried to ignore the existence of the national Polish government and treat the reactionary London émigré clique as the only government of Poland. As a "concession" however, they proposed setting up a completely new government in Poland in the hope of installing a majority of their supporters. Objections by the Soviet Union and the new, democratic Poland compelled the Western powers to recognise the Provisional Government—but only on condition of its reorganisation. In this way the United States and Britain continued to interfere in Poland's affairs and tried to influence the composition of the Polish government. The Soviet Union and Poland's democratic Provisional Government agreed to make certain concessions. A decision was passed by the conference stating that the Provisional Government should be reorganised with the inclusion of "democratic figures from Poland itself and Poles from abroad".[142] After reorganisation the government was to be recognised by the United States and Britain, and as "democratic figures" they were trying to impose such reactionaries as Mikolajczyk. The reorganised government became known as the Provisional Government of National Unity. The émigré government ceased to exist. This was the advantage of the compromise that had been reached.

The Crimea Conference also had to deal with questions involving Yugoslavia. As in Poland, there were a people's government, which in fact was administering the country and had the support of the people, and a reactionary émigré clique that was quite incapable of representing the country. The governments of the United States and Britain sympathised with the Yugoslav king and his circle who were in emig-

[142] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. III, p. 106. The Soviet Union's Participation in International Conferences during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45. Vol. 4. The Conference of the Heads of State of the USSR, USA and Great Britain in the Crimea, February 4-11, 1945. Collection of Documents (hereafter: *The Crimean Conference*), Moscow, 1979, p. 269 (in Russian).

ration. At the same time they realised that their interests demanded contact with the *de facto* people's government no matter how negative their feelings towards it. In the Crimea they agreed that Tito and Šubašič should be advised to implement the agreement they had achieved and form a provisional coalition government.

The Crimea Conference thus adopted for Yugoslavia a compromise that was in some respects similar to the one achieved for Poland. The elimination of the émigré government and the removal of the king were obtained at the expense of including a certain number of bourgeois politicians in the people's democratic government that was in fact administering the country.

The Soviet government decided that the USSR should enter the war against Japan two or three months after the end of the war in Europe. The following three conditions were agreed upon:

1. Preservation of the existing situation in the Mongolian People's Republic.

2. Restoration of Russia's rights that had been violated by Japan's treacherous attack in 1904, namely (a) return of Southern Sakhalin; (b) internationalisation of Dairen and renewal of the lease on Port Arthur as a naval base for the USSR; and (c) joint exploitation with China of the Chinese-Eastern and South-Manchurian railway lines.

3. Handing over of the Kuril Islands to the Soviet Union.

The conference considered the question of setting up a United Nations Organisation and passed the decision to hold a conference of the United Nations in San Francisco on April 25, 1945 that would prepare a final draft of the Charter. A concerted decision was also passed on a vital question—the procedure of voting in the Security Council, proposed by the delegation of the United States.[143]

The conference adopted a Declaration on Liberated Europe. This declaration proclaimed that the USSR, USA and Britain "jointly declare their mutual agreement to concert during the temporary period of instability in liberated Europe the policies of their three governments in assisting the peoples liberated from the domination of Nazi Germany and the peoples of the former Axis satellite states of Europe to solve by democratic means their pressing political and economic problems.

"The establishment of order in Europe and the rebuilding of national economic life must be achieved by processes which will enable the liberated peoples to destroy the last vestiges of Nazism and Fascism and to create democratic institutions of their own choice."[144] During the debate on the draft the Soviet delegation introduced an amendment designed to protect the countries which

[143] For further details see pp. 483-487.

[144] *Foreign Relations of the United States... The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, p. 972; *The Crimean Conference*, pp. 267-69.

had chosen to develop as People's Democracies against the direct intervention of Great Britain and the United States. The Soviet delegation proposed that provisions should be made to substitute mutual consultations for a permanent mechanism, as proposed in the American draft, to exercise joint responsibility. The amendment was accepted.[145] This declaration thus emphasised the need to maintain the unity of the three great powers in dealing with important international problems during the postwar period. In the event, however, the Soviet Union's Western allies tried to use the "assistance" that the declaration envisaged for the peoples of Europe as a means of interfering in their internal affairs and propping up the forces of reaction.

The Soviet Union always regarded it as essential to maintain close cooperation between the powers taking part in the anti-fascist coalition after the war. The Crimea Conference was summed up in a document headed "Unity for Peace as for War". The leaders of the three great powers agreed to preserve and promote the cooperation that had taken place between the Soviet Union, United States and Britain during the war in the forthcoming period of peace. The declaration stressed that "only with continuing and growing cooperation and understanding among our three countries and among all the peace-loving nations can the highest aspiration of humanity be realized—a secure and lasting peace...."[146]

For the practical realisation of the decision taken by the three powers on cooperation in settling international problems the conference provided for the periodical holding of conferences of foreign ministers. It was intended that ministers should meet every three or four months.

The Crimea Conference worked out a programme for the democratic organisation of the postwar world. It inspired the peoples in their fight against fascism and marked the ultimate failure of nazi Germany's plans for splitting the allied camp.

The whole conference proceeded in an atmosphere of the enormously enhanced international prestige of the Soviet Union and its peace-loving policy. The Soviet Union obtained the consent of the United States and Britain to a number of joint decisions designed to give the postwar world a democratic structure.

For the sake of obtaining concerted decisions and in order to strengthen relations between the main countries of the anti-Hitler coalition the Soviet delegation met many of the wishes of the American and British delegations; the latter also had to take into account the interests of the Soviet Union. They did so in large measure because they needed Soviet help in the war against Japan.

[145] *The Crimean Conference, pp. 36-37.*

[146] *Foreign Relations of the United States... The Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945,* p. 975.

The Crimea Conference marked an important stage in the efforts of peace-loving humanity to bring the war to an end as soon as possible and achieve a democratic solution to postwar problems.

The joint struggle against nazism provided a firm basis for the development of fraternal friendship between the USSR and its allies in Central and Southeast Europe. On April 5, 1945 the Yugoslav government delegation arrived in Moscow. Speaking on his arrival, Marshal Tito expressed "deep gratitude to the Soviet Union for the enormous moral and material help that it gave and is giving to the peoples of Yugoslavia in their arduous struggle...." On April 11, a Soviet-Yugoslav treaty of friendship, mutual assistance and postwar cooperation[147] was signed in Moscow. This treaty created the necessary preconditions for the development of relations of a new type built on all-round fraternal cooperation between the peoples of the USSR and Yugoslavia.

On April 21, 1945 the Soviet government concluded a treaty of friendship, mutual assistance and postwar collaboration with Poland.[148] Both sides expressed their firm determination to pursue the struggle against nazi Germany to final and complete victory and undertook "to render each other military and other assistance by all the means at their disposal". The treaty pointed out that "the interests of the security and prosperity of the Soviet and Polish peoples call for the preservation and strengthening of a stable and permanent friendship in time of war and after the war".

The USSR and Poland pledged themselves to take after the war all necessary measures to remove any danger of a repetition of aggression by Germany. In the event of one of the contracting sides becoming involved during the postwar period in military operations against Germany or any other state allied with Germany directly or in any other form in such a war, the other side undertook to render immediate military and other assistance by all the means at its disposal.

The USSR and Poland undertook "to assist each other in the economic rehabilitation of both countries". The conclusion of this treaty was an outstanding historic event, which reflected the radical change that had taken place in relations between the Soviet and Polish peoples. It sealed forever the ties of fraternal friendship, mutual assistance and all-round cooperation between the two peoples. The treaty laid a firm foundation for the development of relations of a new type based on the unshakeable principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism. The signing of the treaty reinforced the internal and international positions of the Provisional Government of democratic Poland.

[147] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. III, pp. 166, 175-78 (in Russian).

[148] Ibid., pp. 197-201.

The peoples of the Soviet Union, Poland and Yugoslavia warmly supported the Soviet-Polish and Soviet-Yugoslav treaties. At a meeting in Warsaw dedicated to the signing of the treaty a resolution was passed that stated: "The Polish people are mindful of the fact that the independence and economic and cultural prosperity of Poland depend on friendship with the Soviet Union."[149]

The Soviet government's consistent policy of reviving the national sovereignty of countries liberated from nazi domination was vividly expressed in its relations with Austria. When Austria was liberated the Soviet government immediately restored the national government in the parts of the country that had been liberated by Soviet troops. A Provisional Government was set up under the leadership of the Social-Democrat Renner.

Defeat and Unconditional Surrender of Nazi Germany. The Potsdam Conference

In the spring of 1945 the nazi regime in Germany collapsed. One of the darkest chapters in the history of mankind had come to an end. Hitler Germany had suffered total military, political, economic and moral defeat. Hitler committed suicide and his closest accomplices were either captured or went into hiding.

The decisive role in the victory over nazism had been played by the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces. The statesmen of the United States, Britain, France and other countries who had entered the struggle against nazi Germany had been compelled to acknowledge this indisputable fact. In April 1942 President Roosevelt had said: "The Russian armies have destroyed and are destroying more of the armed forces of our enemies—troops, aircraft, tanks and guns—than all the allied countries taken together."[150]

After the battle of Stalingrad, in the spring of 1943 Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, stated that Hitler had inflicted grave and terrible wounds on Russia but, he went on, "... Russia has not only survived and recovered from these frightful injuries, but has inflicted, as no other force in the world could have inflicted, mortal damage on the German army machine".[151]

In 1958 Field Marshal Montgomery, the former commander of British troops in Europe, objectively assessed the role of the Soviet Union in the war. He wrote that while Britain and the United States

[149] *Izvestia*, April 24, 1945.

[150] E. Poteer, *The United States as World Sea Power*, New York, 1956, p. 685.

[151] *Winston Churchill. His Complete Speeches. 1897-1963*, Vol. VII, New York and London, 1974, p. 6820.

were building up their strength "Russia had to bear, almost unaided, the full onslaught of Germany she had suffered more severely than any other nation. And then came peace."[152]

At the end of April 1945 the whole world press described the capture of Berlin as a historic victory of the Soviet army. The French *Nouvelles du matin* wrote, for example, "...it has come at last! The Russians are in Berlin! ...Three cheers for the glorious Russian army!" The long-awaited hour has struck, exclaimed *Ce Soir*, the hour that all the peace-loving peoples have awaited with anxious hearts ever since Hitler committed his first crime in Europe.

The capture of Berlin spelled the total defeat of nazi Germany.

During the night of May 8-9, at Karlshorst, a suburb of Berlin, in the presence of representatives of the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and France, Keitel, Friedeburg and Stumpf, acting on behalf of the German Supreme Command, signed the Act of Military Surrender of Germany. At 23:01 hours, central European time, May 8, the guns stopped firing. The war against Germany was over.

All armed forces under German command were ordered to remain where they were at the moment of surrender and to disarm themselves completely. On the night of May 9 the German army began laying down its arms en masse and during the next 24 hours military operations virtually ceased in the European theatre. Favourable prospects for peaceful democratic development now unfolded before the peoples of Europe and the German people was also among those that were liberated from the nazi yoke.

On June 5, 1945 a Declaration Regarding the Defeat of Germany and the assumption of supreme power over Germany by the governments of the USSR, USA, Britain and the Provisional Government of France was signed in Berlin, and on June 6, a brief summary was published of the agreements earlier concluded on zones of occupation in Germany and on the control machinery in Germany.

In July-August 1945 most of the work of setting up four-power control machinery in Germany was completed. The Control Council, the military administrations in the occupation zones, the inter-allied commandants' office in Berlin began their practical activities.

From the start, however, a sharp difference of approach emerged in the Control Council over its approach to the solution of the main problem—demilitarisation, denazification and the reorganisation of the German people's life on a democratic basis.

As it always had done during the difficult years of the war, so after victory over fascism the Soviet government firmly maintained that the German people should not be identified with the nazi clique and that no policy of revenge should be pursued against them. On the basis of

[152] *The Memoirs of Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery*, London, 1958, p. 454.

its experience of the people's struggle against German aggression, the Soviet Union demanded the democratisation and demilitarisation of Germany and the total eradication of every vestige of nazism. At the same time the Soviet government believed that Germany should be given ample opportunity to develop as a united, democratic and peace-loving state.

As for the Western powers, they were least of all concerned about the need for reorganising the life of the German people on democratic and peace-loving principles. A directive sent by the US President to the American Command in Germany (No.1067 of May 10, 1945) stated: "Germany will not be occupied for the purpose of liberation but as a defeated enemy nation."[153]

The Soviet government wanted the cooperation with the United States and Britain to continue into the postwar period. It devoted every effort to achieving solutions to the key questions of international life in agreement with the governments of the allied powers on the basis of democratic principles. This desire of the Soviet government was reflected at the Potsdam Conference.

The conference opened on July 17 and continued until August 2, 1945. As in the Crimea, the heads of government of the USSR, United States and Britain took part, and the question of Germany was central to its work.

The path the future development of Germany was to take depended primarily on the leading powers of the anti-Hitler coalition—the Soviet Union, United States, Britain and France—on how they fulfilled their obligations to reorganise the life of the German people on peaceful and democratic principles.

The chief aim of the allied decisions on Germany that had been passed during the war was to bring about the complete democratisation of the country and forever eradicate the roots of German militarism and revanchism, to disarm German imperialism politically and economically and to create conditions for the development of Germany that would not allow her to return to the former path of aggression. The future of Germany and the peace and security of the peoples of all Europe depended on the fulfilment of these decisions.

A joint policy for the participants in the anti-Hitler coalition on the German question was worked out at the Potsdam Conference.

The obligation to pursue a concerted policy towards Germany was recorded in the agreement on political and economic Principles to Govern the Treatment of Germany in the Initial Control Period.[154] The essence of these principles was the demilitarisation and democratisation of Germany. In accordance with the decisions of the Crimea

[153] *The Department of State Bulletin*, October 21, 1945, Vol. XIII, No. 330, p. 598.

[154] *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. VIII, p. 927.

Conference they provided for the total disarmament of Germany and the liquidation of all German industry that could be used for war production.

The participants in the conference agreed on the need "to destroy the National Socialist Party and its affiliated and supervised organisations, to dissolve all nazi institutions, to ensure that they are not revived in any form, and to prevent all nazi and militarist activity or propaganda". The three powers agreed then and in the future to take all the measures necessary to ensure that Germany should never again threaten its neighbours or world peace.

In this connection the Control Council and the allied administration in each zone were instructed to carry out complete disarmament and demilitarisation; to convince the German people that they could not avoid responsibility for the consequences of the war; and to prepare the reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis.

At Potsdam it was decided that Germany should be regarded as an integral economic entity. This meant reorganising Germany's economy with the emphasis on development of peaceful industry and agriculture. The German economy was to be decentralised "for the purpose of eliminating the present excessive concentration of economic power as exemplified in particular by cartels, syndicates, trusts and other monopolistic arrangements". The Potsdam Conference thus took a most important resolution on the abolition of the German monopolies.

The leaders of the three powers also signed a special agreement on reparations. This was in accordance with a decision of the Crimea Conference and was based on the assumption that Germany should compensate as far as possible for the damage that it had inflicted on other peoples. The Soviet Union's reparation claims were to be satisfied by confiscations from the zone occupied by the Soviet Union and from the corresponding German investments (balances) abroad. It was also agreed that the Soviet Union should in addition receive from the Western zones of occupation: (1) 15 per cent of the industrial equipment confiscated as payment of reparations in exchange for food and other products from the Soviet occupation zone and (2) 10 per cent of the confiscated capital industrial equipment without charge or reimbursement. The amount of confiscated capital equipment was to be fixed "within 6 months at the latest" from the time of the conference, that is, before February 1946. Out of its share of the reparations the Soviet Union was to satisfy Poland's reparation claims.

The Potsdam Conference also established the new Polish-German border along the Oder-Western Neisse line, which began from the Baltic Sea a little to the West of Sweinemünde (including the city of Stettin in Poland). Establishing of this border was backed up by a

conference decision on deportation of the German population that had remained in Poland (similar action was taken with regard to those in Czechoslovakia and Hungary). Soon afterwards the Control Council passed a decision on the deportation of the German population from those areas that had been handed over to Poland east of the Oder-Western Neisse line. By empowering their Commanders-in-Chief to sign this decision on the deportation of several millions of people the Western powers once again confirmed their recognition of the permanent character of the border established at Potsdam. In view of the formation of the new Polish Government of National Unity the Soviet delegation insisted that it should be given all stock, assets and all other property belonging to Poland that was still at the disposal of the émigré clique. In addition it demanded that the Polish armed forces, including the navy and merchant marine should be subordinated to the new Polish government.[155]

The conference endorsed the handing over of Koenigsberg and the adjacent lands to the Soviet Union. It set up a Council of Foreign Ministers charged with the task of preparing a peaceful settlement. One of the Council's immediate tasks was to draw up peace treaties with Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland. The Council had also to prepare a peaceful settlement for Germany.

The Soviet government proposed extending the jurisdiction of the Austrian Provisional Government over the whole country, including the parts of Austria that had been occupied by the troops of the Western powers. The latter rejected this proposal and a resolution was passed stating that this question would be further studied after the troops of the Western allies had entered Vienna—the capital of Austria was to be occupied by troops of all four great powers.

There is much of authoritative evidence to suggest that the heads of government of the USA and Britain intended to bring up their plans for the dismemberment of Germany at Potsdam. For example, US Admiral Leahy, one of Truman's closest advisers, states in his memoirs that the US President set out for the Potsdam Conference with a plan for the division of Germany "into separate sovereign states". Leahy writes that Truman wanted to propose that "the Council of Foreign Ministers report to their governments a recommendation as to the dismemberment of Germany" and that the Potsdam Conference should announce the intention "of granting the Rhineland independence and sovereignty as a separate state". In addition it was the President's opinion that a south German state with its capital in Vienna should be created out of Austria, Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden and Hungary.[156]

[155] *International Affairs*, No. 10, 1965, p. 108-109.

[156] W. D. Leahy, *I Was There*, New York-London-Toronto, 1950, pp. 389, 390.

Even before the Potsdam Conference the Soviet government had publicly declared that it had no intention of dismembering Germany. "The Soviet Union," Stalin's address of May 9, 1945 stated, "is celebrating victory, although it does not intend either to dismember or to destroy Germany."[157] At the conference itself the Soviet side reaffirmed its view that Germany should remain a united state. In such circumstances Truman preferred not to advertise his intentions.

In the course of the Potsdam Conference the Soviet Union proposed setting up a Provisional all-Germany Government, which would coordinate the activities of German government agencies and unify economic and political measures across Germany. The Soviet proposal was not accepted because of objections from the United States and Britain. The most they would agree to was to set up a number of all-Germany administrative departments for the main branches of the economy that would operate under the guidance of the Control Council. Subsequently the Western powers saw to it that this decision was not carried out either.

Despite the friction over the preservation of Germany's political and economic integrity at the Potsdam Conference, the three powers nevertheless reached agreement on the basic directions of a common policy towards Germany. But even then it was felt that the United States and Britain were continuing their cooperation with the USSR only under pressure of circumstances, that they had their own, imperialist programme of action in Germany diverging widely from the coordinated decisions of the great powers signed by American and British representatives. This programme had been evolved in the course of the war and its realisation had been delayed by the contradictions between the Western powers and by the continuing war against Japan.

On the one hand, the USA, Britain and France wanted to weaken Germany as far as possible as their economic competitor and political rival and turn her into an obedient instrument of their policy. Not for nothing had Churchill during his visit to Moscow in October 1944 told Stalin quite frankly that after the war Britain "intended in some measure to take Germany's place in Europe as a producer of commodities for the smaller European countries".[158]

On the other hand, the ruling circles of the Western powers saw in the vastly increased power of the Soviet Union the main threat to their imperialist interests. As Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury in the Roosevelt administration, admitted, a significant

[157] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. III, p. 45.

[158] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers Stalin and Churchill, October 17, 1944.

number of US statesmen believed that "...we need Germany as a bulwark against Russia and communism".[159]

The desire to weaken the positions of the USSR at all costs, to harness German militarism and try once again to use it against the forces of peace, socialism and democracy emerged clearly after the Second World War had been brought to a victorious conclusion and the United States, Britain and France no longer needed military cooperation with the Soviet Union. In his memoirs Churchill states that "the destruction of Germany's military might brought about a radical change in relations" with Soviet Russia. He demanded that "...a new front must be immediately created against her onward sweep".[160]

Such was the secret programme of action that the imperialist powers had planned on the German question—and tried to put into effect even before the gun smoke had dissolved over Europe. We have only to recall the order, unprecedented in its treachery and cynicism, that Churchill sent to Field Marshal Montgomery at the beginning of 1945, when Soviet troops were making their big push into Germany. "I telegraphed to Lord Montgomery directing him to be careful in collecting the German arms, to stack them so that they could easily be issued again to the German soldiers whom we should have to work with if the Soviet advance continued."[161]

It is known that Churchill had secret talks with the Americans to prepare for Britain and the United States' abandonment of cooperation with the Soviet Union and reneging on the allied agreements on Germany. With the death of Roosevelt and Truman's accession to the post of President such a turn of events became a foregone conclusion. But in the summer of 1945 the US government was still not ready to take this step in practice. It was still at war with Japan and for a time was compelled to preserve the continuity of its former policy.

As a result of the Soviet Union's firm and consistent policy and the growth of its prestige, the government of the United States and the British government had no alternative but to accede to the Potsdam agreement. This agreement was in line with the just character of the war against nazi Germany and the principles of a democratic peace settlement. The representatives of the United States, Britain and France worked together with the Soviet representatives on the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, which condemned the main German war criminals (November 20, 1945 to October 1, 1946).

[159] H. Morgenthau, Jr., *Germany Is Our Problem*, New York, London, 1945, p. 89.

[160] W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. VI, p. 400.

[161] *Daily Herald*, November 24, 1954.

Entry of the USSR into the War Against Japan

At Potsdam the Soviet government had confirmed its undertaking, made at the Crimea Conference, to enter the war against Japan on the allied side. In doing so it was guided by a sense of duty to its allies and also by the fact that throughout the war Japan had adopted a clearly hostile policy towards the USSR and systematically violated its commitments under the Treaty of Neutrality with the Soviet Union of 1941.

On April 5, 1945 the treaty was accordingly denounced by the Soviet government.

Article 1 of this treaty had stated that both sides would "maintain peaceful and friendly relations". Article 2 committed the sides to maintain neutrality in the event of one of the sides becoming the target of military operations on the part of one or several powers. Soon after the conclusion of the treaty nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union, and Japan, as an ally of Germany, began to give her active assistance in her war against the USSR. In addition to this, as the diplomatic papers of nazi Germany published in Britain testify, at the end of August 1941 the Japanese government informed Germany that Japan was ready to attack the USSR. When the Germans were routed at Moscow this attack was postponed until the spring of 1942 and in the end it was completely abandoned.[162] Although Japan did not attack the Soviet Union, she nevertheless infringed the treaty providing for maintenance of peaceful and friendly relations by concentrating on the frontiers of the USSR her Kwantung army numbering about a million men, 1,000 tanks and 1,500 aircraft. Japan constantly violated the state borders of the Soviet Union and by holding down considerable forces of the Red Army in the Far East rendered invaluable aid to nazi Germany. The USSR was compelled to maintain between 30 and 40 divisions on its eastern borders in readiness to repel a possible Japanese attack. In the course of 1942 alone 96 violations of the Soviet border were committed.

At the outset of the Soviet-German war the Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka openly announced the possibility of Japan's renouncing the neutrality treaty. On June 25, 1941, in answer to questions from the Soviet Ambassador on Japan's position with regard to the Soviet-German war Matsuoka stated that "the basis of Japan's foreign policy is the Tripartite Pact, and if in the present war the treaty on neutrality comes into conflict with this basis, i.e., the Tripartite Pact, the treaty of neutrality will no longer have effect".[163]

[162] *History of Diplomacy*, Vol. IV, p. 304-07.

[163] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Transcript of a Conversation Between Soviet Ambassador in Japan and Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs Matsuoka, June 25, 1941.

Despite their treaty obligations the Japanese authorities hindered Soviet shipping in the Far East. Between 1941 and 1945 the Japanese captured and sank 18 Soviet ships and during this period the Soviet Union's total losses in shipping came to 636,993,750 rubles.[164]

In the course of the war Japan kept the nazi government supplied with secret information about the Soviet Union's economic, political, and military position that had been gathered through diplomatic channels and military intelligence.

"In such a situation," the Soviet government statement observed, "the Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact has become meaningless and can no longer be continued."[165]

The only proper answer to this hostile Japanese policy was for the USSR to become officially associated with the Potsdam declaration made by the United States, Britain and China concerning Japan on August 8, 1945 and to declare a state of war between the USSR and Japan as of August 9. Thus the Soviet Union in its efforts to hasten world peace punctually fulfilled the undertaking that it had given at the Crimea Conference.

On August 14, 1945 during the Soviet army's offensive against the Japanese aggressors, a treaty of friendship and alliance between the USSR and China and a number of concurrent agreements were signed in Moscow.

Under Article 1 of the treaty both sides undertook "to wage war against Japan until final victory" and "to render each other all necessary military and other assistance and support in this war". The USSR and China also pledged that after the war against Japan they would "take all measures in their power to make any repetition of aggression and violation of peace by Japan impossible".[166]

The concurrent agreements provided that the main lines of the Chinese Changchun Railway (Chinese-Eastern and South-Manchurian lines) should after the expulsion of the Japanese armed forces from China's three eastern provinces become the common property of the USSR and the Republic of China and be jointly exploited by them. It was also agreed that Port Arthur should be used jointly as a naval base and that Port Dalan (Dalny) should be declared a free port with wharves and storing facilities leased to the USSR.

The signing of the treaty with China was accompanied by an exchange of notes between the two countries concerning the independence of the Mongolian People's Republic, Chinese sovereignty over Manchuria, and a number of other questions. The separate agreement

[164] Soviet Foreign Policy Archives. Record of Losses Suffered by Soviet Shipping, 1941-1945, as a Result of Military and Other Operations by Japan in the Pacific.

[165] *Soviet Foreign Policy During the Great Patriotic War*, Vol. III, p. 166 (in Russian).

[166] Ibid., p. 459.

was concluded defining the relations to be maintained between the Soviet Commander-in-Chief and the Chinese administration after the entry of Soviet troops into the three eastern provinces in connection with the joint operations against Japan.

Under massive pressure from the Red Army the Japanese Kwantung army surrendered and on September 2, 1945 the Japanese government signed the act of unconditional surrender.

The defeat of Japan was a major blow to the imperialist camp as a whole. As a result of the Soviet army's victory over militarist Japan the Soviet Union regained the ancient Russian lands of Southern Sakhalin, which had been seized by the Japanese after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, and the Kuril Islands. These territories were returned to the USSR in accordance with the Yalta agreement, which had stipulated the conditions under which the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan.

The Soviet entry into the war against Japan was of great historical significance. For eight years, since 1937, the Chinese people had been waging a valiant struggle against the Japanese imperialists. If one counted from the time of the seizure of Manchuria this struggle had been going for 14 years. The United States in the course of four and a half years of war had crippled Japan's naval and air strength. But Japan was still powerful on land. It was her land forces and not her navy that were fighting China. The Soviet blow against the Kwantung army led to the immediate collapse of Japan's power on land.

Just as the victories of Soviet troops on the German front had led to a mass upsurge of the struggle against Hitler's tyranny, so did the Soviet Union's entry into the war against Japan evoke a further upswing of the national liberation movement in the Far East and in Southeast Asia.

After defeating the Japanese imperialists the Soviet Union gave the Chinese people all-round assistance in their revolutionary struggle for liberation. In the fight against the reactionary Kuomintang troops the Chinese people's liberation armies used the weapons and ammunition of the former Kwantung and Manchoukuo armies that had been routed by the armed forces of the Soviet Union. The treaty of friendship and alliance between the USSR and China, signed on August 14, 1945, thus made a substantial contribution to the Chinese people's successful struggle against the forces of reaction and particularly the liberation of North China. Writing of this treaty, the Chinese historian Peng-Ming states, "Although the Sino-Soviet treaty of friendship and alliance was signed between the Soviet Union and the Kuomintang government, it was, in the circumstances of that time, an expression of friendship between the peoples of China and the USSR and corresponded to the interests of the Chinese people".[167]

[167] Peng Ming, *A Brief History of the Friendship Between the Peoples of China and the Soviet Union*, Moscow, 1957, pp. 101, 112 (Russ. ed.).

The broad masses of the Chinese people approved of this treaty because they saw in it and in other agreements with the Soviet Union real and effective support for their struggle against the Japanese occupying forces and foreign imperialism, and for freedom and independence. The presence on the basis of this agreement of Soviet troops and administrators in Port Arthur and Dalan (Dalny) and the Soviet control of the railways in Northeast China made it difficult for the Kuomintang forces to use the ports of Northeast China as bases for operations against the People's Liberation Army.

The defeat of Japan brought the peoples of Asia freedom from the oppression of the Japanese aggressors and marked the long-awaited end of the Second World War.

The USSR and the Foundation of the United Nations Organisation. The Conferences at Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco

While the war was still on, the Soviet government had studied the question of ensuring stable peace in postwar Europe. A Soviet programme of postwar global reconstruction had been drawn up by the Politburo of the CPSU(B) Central Committee and expounded in Stalin's speech of November 6, 1943. The first practical step in this direction had been taken at the beginning of September 1943, when the Poliburo set up a commission to deal with questions of peace treaties and postwar organisation, and also an armistice commission.[168]

In accordance with the declaration of the Moscow Conference of 1943 a conference of representatives of the USSR, USA and Britain and, later, representatives of the USA, Britain and China opened at Dumbarton Oaks (a suburb of Washington) on August 21, 1944. The Soviet delegation was led by A. A. Gromyko, the Soviet Ambassador in the United States. With very active participation by the USSR the conference drew up proposals to establish an international organisation for maintaining peace and security. This was, in effect, the draft of the Charter and other documents connected with the foundation of the institution that later became known as the United Nations Organisation.

The interests and political aspirations of states represented at Dumbarton Oaks differed widely on the postwar settlement.

The USSR wanted a world free of armed conflicts. The Soviet delegation assumed that the contemplated international organisation should be founded on the principles of sovereign equality of

[168] *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Vol. 5, Book 1, p. 549 (in Russian).

its members and should serve the interests of universal peace and security.

The US and British monopoly interest sought to ensure the hegemony of their states in the postwar world. This is frankly admitted in the memoirs of the US Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who said bluntly to a group of American Senators that "if we should halt our forward movement in support of the postwar organization proposal, the remainder of the world would promptly conclude that we had surrendered our leadership in the situation."[169] The biggest problem in drafting the UN Charter was that of devising a system of voting in the Security Council. The key task for Soviet diplomacy was to ensure that the organisation's activities would really serve the cause of peace and not allow one power or group of powers to use the organisation for their selfish interests as a weapon against other states. The organisation was to become a vehicle of cooperation between states and above all between those that could do most to ensure peace—the great powers. On no account should it develop into a means for the domination by one grouping over other states. To ensure this the organisation had to be equipped with a system of decision-making that would prevent it from being used against the interests of peace and the peoples or to the detriment of the legitimate interests of one state or another. The body on which the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace rested was to be the Security Council. This body was to have five permanent members, the five great powers. An additional six non-permanent members were to be elected by all members of the organisation for a definite term. Thus the system of voting in the Security Council itself, as the body entrusted with taking action to maintain peace, acquired a special importance.

At the Dumbarton Oaks conference the United States proposed that the decisions of the Security Council should have force only if there was unanimity among all its permanent members—the USSR, USA, Britain, China and France. The United States was therefore the initiator of the so-called right of veto that followed from the demand for unanimity of the five great powers.

However, the American draft provided for one exception to the unanimity rule. It proposed that in cases when one of the members of the Council was involved in a dispute that member's vote should not be counted during the passing of the Council's decision on that particular question. Acceptance of this American proposal could easily have set the great powers against each other and would consequently have undermined their cooperation, without which the UN could not have existed as a world organisation. The system of voting in the Security Council proposed by the United States did not provide adequate guarantees against abuses of the United Nations Organi-

[169] *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, Vol. II, New York, 1948, p. 1661.

sation. Under such a system of voting the Western powers could have passed decisions on the application of military and economic sanctions, on breaking off diplomatic relations with one state or a group of states not with a view to securing peace but for the sake of narrow selfish interests. The American draft created a danger that the powers possessing a majority in the Council would resort to the use of force and even war instead of searching patiently for mutually acceptable solutions.

On these grounds the Soviet Union refused to accept the United States proposal on the system of voting in the Security Council and at Dumbarton Oaks this question remained unsolved.

On September 14, 1944 the Soviet government, in an attempt to find an acceptable compromise declared that it would not object to efforts to work out a special formula for the system of voting to be adopted on disputed questions in which the great powers were involved. In cases when no measures of coercion were required, the principle of unanimity need not be applied.

In December 1944 President Roosevelt, conceding to the demands of the USSR, proposed a new, revised formula defining the system of voting in the Security Council as follows: 1. Each member of the Security Council should have one vote. 2. Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters should be made by an affirmative vote of 7 members. This meant that in determining the procedure of this body the unanimity of the permanent members (the great powers) was not required. Most significant of all was point 3 of the American proposal: 3. Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters should be made by an affirmative vote of 7 members including the concurring votes of all the permanent members; a party to a dispute should abstain from voting when decisions were being made under the sections of the Charter concerning the peaceful regulation of disputes. Thus, according to this proposal the principle of unanimity was not to be applied in two cases: in defining the procedure for the Security Council and in settling disputes involving a member of the Council (including permanent members) as long as that dispute was to be solved by peaceful means. If, on the other hand, measures of coercion—breaking off economic, railway, sea or other connections and, in the extreme case, use of armed forces—were to be applied, the decision could be passed only by a unanimous vote of the permanent members of the Council even if they themselves were parties to the dispute or conflict.

The system of voting in the Security Council proposed by Roosevelt was approved at the Crimea Conference. This system with its requirement of unanimity of the five permanent members of the Security Council assumed that they would arrive at mutually coordinated decisions by means of negotiations. In other words, the great powers were expected to cooperate and not to impose decisions

by diktat. This was practical recognition of the principle of peaceful coexistence in relations between states with different social and economic systems.

In the Crimea the heads of the three governments agreed to hold a conference of the United Nations in San Francisco in April 1945 to finally prepare the Charter of the Organisation "in accordance with the principles worked out during the unofficial negotiations at Dumbarton Oaks". The United States and Britain gave an undertaking that at San Francisco they would support the declaration of the Soviet government that the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics should become founder states of the UN.

On the historic day, April 25, 1945, when troops of the First Ukrainian Front linked up with allied American and British troops near Torgau in Germany, the conference of the United Nations opened in San Francisco to establish an international organisation called upon to unite the efforts of the peace-loving states for peace and international security. This conference had been made possible by the victory over Germany.

However, owing to the devastating world war that has weakened most of the states of Europe, the dependence of the majority of the bourgeois states on American imperialism, the domination of colonial regimes in Africa and a considerable part of Asia, the prevailing influence at the San Francisco conference was that of the United States. The conference was attended by representatives of 50 countries, who signed the UN Charter and are considered the founder states of the United Nations.

On the whole the conference passed in an atmosphere of unity between the allied powers—the USSR, USA and Britain. Even then, however, it could be seen that the Western powers were moving away from cooperation with the Soviet Union. Specifically, this departure showed itself in the refusal by the United States, Britain and France to invite representatives of the Provisional Government of Poland, which they had still not recognised, to participate in the conference, despite Soviet insistence. The conference nevertheless decided to count Poland as a founder state and to leave a place in the original document of the Charter for the signature of Poland's representatives.

Thanks to the work of the conference at San Francisco the foundations were successfully laid of an international organisation on which the peoples of the world had placed great hopes as a means of maintaining peace and security. Although the debates on the Charter revealed a whole series of formidable differences between the participants, the desire for peace was so great that all governments represented at the conference agreed to accept the Charter. "It cannot be said that no difficulties were experienced in the course of the work of the conference or that no disparity of views arose between individual delegations on this or that question," the head of the Soviet delega-

tion A. A. Gromyko stated in his concluding speech at the conference. "However, the surprising thing is not the existence of such difficulties, not the existence of different views among individual delegations on certain questions, but the fact that as a result of the work of the conference all the basic difficulties have been overcome and the tasks set before the conference successfully completed." The head of the Soviet delegation expressed confidence that the San Francisco conference would go down in history as a most significant event and that the efforts of the United Nations would bring positive results for all peace-loving peoples of the world, who had endured so many hardships and so much suffering in the inferno of war ignited by nazism. He expressed the hope that the new organisation would be effective in ensuring cooperation, unity and coordination of the activities of all its members.[170]

For the Charter to come into effect it had to be ratified by the governments of the USSR, USA, Britain, France and China, the permanent members of the Security Council, and a majority of the other states that had signed it. The Charter came into force on October 24, 1945.

* * *

During the Great Patriotic War the Soviet Union's foreign policy was entirely dedicated to the cause of victory over the enemy. It was directed towards strengthening the fighting alliance of the freedom-loving peoples that were at war with the fascist states, towards liberating the regions of the USSR that had been occupied by the aggressors, and towards liberating all the peoples of Europe and Asia who had fallen under the yoke of German and Italian fascism, and Japanese imperialism.

The enemy had counted on isolating the Soviet Union diplomatically, on splitting the ranks of its adversaries by opposing the Soviet Union to the bourgeois participants in the anti-Hitler coalition. These calculations proved to be ill-founded. The profound contradictions between the main imperialist powers caused a split in the capitalist world. In alliance with the United States and Britain the USSR was able to set up the anti-Hitler coalition and preserve it intact throughout the war.

The most consistent, principled supporters of the development of relations of alliance with the Soviet Union were the progressive, democratic organisations in Britain, the USA, France and other countries.

The idea of collective resistance to an aggressor which Soviet foreign policy and diplomacy had insistently demanded and worked

[170] *Pravda*, June 28, 1945.

for even before the war found its practical realisation in the anti-Hitler coalition.

The Soviet government attached great importance to this coalition and highly valued its activities during the war. "The creation of the anti-Hitler coalition," states a note from the Soviet government, "is an unexampled fact in contemporary history if only because states with different social systems have joined together in a defensive and just war against a common enemy. The Soviet government holds in high esteem the community of countries that has taken shape in the struggle against fascism and has been sealed by the blood of the peace-loving peoples. The Soviet people would like to preserve and develop the feelings of trust and friendship that permeated its relations with the peoples of the United States, Britain, France and other countries of the anti-Hitler coalition during the grim years of the past war."[171]

The Soviet people remember and value the years of diverse cooperation between the countries that took part in the anti-Hitler coalition. The Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee on the 30th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War states that during the war "the possibility of effective political and military cooperation between states with different social systems was proved in practice".[172]

Alongside the positive results achieved in relations between the main countries of the anti-Hitler coalition there also arose great difficulties. The discussion of a number of military and political questions often revealed serious and sometimes fundamental differences between the positions of the USSR, on the one hand, and Britain and the United States, on the other. These differences and difficulties were mainly due to the divergence of the war aims pursued by the governments of the USSR, the United States and Britain, and this divergence of war aims arose from the fundamental differences in the social systems of the main countries of the anti-Hitler coalition.

The victory over the fascist powers could have been achieved much earlier and at far less cost if the United States and Britain had carried out their duty as allies and opened a second front not in 1944 but at an earlier stage in the war. Their delays in opening a second front cost the peoples of the USSR many lives.

During the war the political, economic, military, cultural and other ties between the Soviet Union and other countries were considerably expanded.

The brilliant victories of Soviet arms and the Leninist principles of Soviet foreign policy, its decisive role in liberating mankind from fascism led to a tremendous growth in the moral and political prestige

[171] *Pravda*, November 28, 1958.

[172] *Kommunist*, No. 3, 1975, p. 7.

of the USSR and its influence on the international scene. This was one of the most important consequences of the victory over fascism.

The people of Yugoslavia and its People's Liberation Army, soldiers of the Polish Army and—during the final stage of the war Bulgarian, Romanian, and Hungarian units fought shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet Army. A great contribution to the common victory over the enemy was made by the peoples and armies of the states of the anti-Hitler coalition.

The Soviet Union's foreign policy was oriented on continuing the close cooperation between the allied states after the war. This was an additional aim of the treaties and agreements that the USSR had concluded with Britain, the United States, France and other countries during the war, and also the decisions that had been passed at various inter-allied conferences.

In those years the leaders of all the powers taking part in the anti-Hitler coalition talked of the need for postwar cooperation. The leaders of the world's three major powers, said Secretary of the US Treasury Morgenthau in 1945, had shown that the unity created by the war should continue after the war and serve as a foundation for the future peace. Britain's deputy Prime Minister Atlee stressed the need for the comradeship in the war between the United Nations to be continued in the days of peace. "I believe," he said, "that Great Britain, the United States and the USSR should remain good neighbours also in time of peace for the sake of the great cause of civilisation." Even Winston Churchill, whose name was later to become associated with the launching of the cold war, was compelled to speak in favour of the preservation and development of friendship and cooperation with the USSR in postwar years.

The Soviet Union believed that the chief purpose of such postwar cooperation should lie in ensuring general lasting and stable peace and above all in preventing the possibility of renewed German aggression. This aim was acknowledged by the Western powers in the decisions of the allied conferences and the corresponding treaties the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, the Charter of the United Nations Organisation, and other international treaties and agreements. These agreements also confirmed the right of the liberated peoples to restore their independence and sovereignty and to take the road of democratic development.

CHRONOLOGY[1]

1917

25 October (7 November)—victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

26 October (8 November)—Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets adopts the Decree on Peace.

2(15) November—Council of People's Commissars adopts the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia.

8(21) November—Soviet government sends Note to Ambassadors of United States of America, Britain, France and several other countries proposing to conclude an armistice and negotiate peace.

9(22) November—People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs announces Soviet government's decision to publicise the secret treaties concluded by the tsar and the Provisional Government.

10(23) November—Soviet government appeals to Ministers of neutral countries requesting them to inform the hostile governments of the Soviet proposal immediately to conclude an armistice and a democratic peace.

15(28) November—Soviet governments and peoples of the belligerent countries urging them to join in the talks on an armistice.

20 November (3 December)—Council of People's Commissars issues appeal "To All Working Moslems of Russia and the East".

21 November (4 December)—agreement is signed on temporary cessation of hostilities between armies of Russian Western Front and German troops.

23 November (6 December)—People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs issues appeal to Allied Ambassadors on an armistice.

9(22) December—Soviet government issues appeal to the working masses of all countries for a general democratic peace.

9(22) December-3 March 1918—peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk.

[1] Dates of events, which occurred prior to 31 January 1918, are given according to Old Style—used in Russia at that time—with New Style indicated in brackets.

18(31) December Council of People's Commissars adopts decree on granting independence to Finland.

23 December 1917 (5 January 1918)—secret Anglo-French convention is concluded on dividing Russia into spheres of influence.

1918

4(17) January—"Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People" is published.

14(27) January—Soviet government annuls agreements prejudicial to Iran's independence.

18 February—German troops resume offensive against Soviet Russia.

21 February—Council of People's Commissars issues the appeal "The Socialist Motherland Is in Danger! "

24 February—All-Russia Central Executive Committee and Council of People's Commissars accept German peace terms.

3 March Soviet Russia signs Brest-Litovsk peace with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey.

6-8 March—Seventh Extraordinary Congress of Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). Resolution on war and peace is adopted.

9 March British troops are landed in Murmansk, marking beginning of armed intervention by Entente in the north of Russia.

15 March—Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty is ratified by Fourth Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets.

18 April—Soviet government lodges a protest against the annexation of Bessarabia by Romania.

22 April Council of People's Commissars decrees nationalisation of foreign trade.

25 May—Czechoslovak Corps stationed in Russia begins anti-Soviet revolt.

27 May—diplomatic relations are established between Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and Afghanistan.

27 August—Russo-German Supplementary Treaty is signed.

5 November Germany severs diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

6 November—Sixth Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets issues appeal to the governments of countries engaged in the war against Soviet Russia to start peace negotiations.

11 November—Compiègne Agreement on armistice between Germany and the Entente powers is signed. First World War is ended.

13 November All-Russia Central Executive Committee denounces Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty.

23-27 November British and French troops are landed in Novorossiisk, Sevastopol and Odessa.

1919

22 January—governments of the Entente powers and USA propose convocation of conference on Princes Islands.

March—William C. Bullitt's mission to Moscow.

28 June—Treaty of Versailles is signed.

25 July—Council of People's Commissars issues appeal to the Chinese people stating the principles of the Soviet policy

course with respect to China.

August—Soviet government issues appeal to Mongolian government and people stating the basic principles of the Soviet policy course with respect to Mongolia.

10 October—Supreme Allied Council imposes economic blockade on Soviet Russia.

8 December—Supreme Allied Council issues the declaration "On the Provisional Eastern Border of Poland" (Curzon Line).

1920

16 January—Entente lifts economic blockade of Soviet Russia.

2 February—peace treaty between RSFSR and Estonia is signed in Yuriev (Tartu).

24-25 February—Soviet government's peace proposals are addressed to USA, Japan, Czechoslovakia and Romania.

12 July—peace treaty is signed between RSFSR and Lithuania.

11 August—peace treaty is signed between RSFSR and Latvia.

12 October—Soviet-Polish treaty on an armistice and preliminary peace terms is signed in Riga.

14 October—peace treaty is signed between RSFSR and Finland.

1921

26 February—treaty of friendship is signed between RSFSR and Iran.

28 February—treaty of friendship is signed between RSFSR and Afghanistan.

16 March—provisional Anglo-Soviet trade agreement is concluded.

16 March—treaty of friendship and fraternity is signed between RSFSR and Turkey.

18 March—peace treaty between Soviet Russia and Poland is signed in Riga.

6 May—provisional Soviet-German trade and political agreement is concluded.

26 August 1921-16 April 1922—Dairen Conference of representatives of Far Eastern Republic and Japan.

2 September—provisional trade agreement is signed between RSFSR and Norway.

13 October—treaty of friendship is signed between Transcaucasian Soviet Republics and Turkey.

2 November—RSFSR government lodges a protest against its exclusion from taking part in Washington Conference.

5 November—agreement is reached on establishing friendly relations between RSFSR and Mongolia.

13 November—RSFSR government lodges a protest against settling the question of Åland Islands without its participation.

26 December—preliminary Soviet-Italian trade agreement is concluded.

1922

2 January—treaty of friendship and fraternity is signed between Ukranian SSR and Turkey.

6 January—Cannes meeting adopts decision to call an international conference in Genoa with the participation of Soviet Russia.

15 March—Soviet government sends Note to governments of Great Britain, France and Italy stating its position on the Genoa Conference.

10 April-19 May—international

Genoa Conference.

16 April—Treaty of Rapallo is signed between RSFSR and Germany.

5 June—provisional agreement is signed between RSFSR and Czechoslovakia.

20 June-20 July—international Hague Conference.

4-26 September—Changchun Conference of representatives of RSFSR, Far Eastern Republic and Japan.

30 September—RSFSR government lodges protest with governments of Great Britain, France and Italy against their blockade of Black Sea.

5 November—Soviet-German agreement is signed on extension of Treaty of Rapallo to Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Transcaucasian Federative Soviet Republic.

20 November 1922-24 July 1923—international Lausanne Conference on peace treaty with Turkey. Convention on the Straits regime is signed.

2-12 December—Moscow Conference of representatives of RSFSR, Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on limitation of armaments.

30 December—First Congress of Soviets of USSR ratifies Declaration and Treaty on the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

1923

13 January—All-Union Central Executive Committee issues appeal to the peoples of the world in connection with the occupation of Ruhr by France.

8 May—Britain presents the Curzon ultimatum to Soviet government.

10 May—V. V. Vorovsky, Soviet representative at Lausanne, is assassinated.

11 May—Soviet government presents its answer to the Curzon ultimatum.

1924

1-8 February—Notes are exchanged on establishing diplomatic relations between USSR and Great Britain.

7 February—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Italy. Soviet-Italian trade treaty is signed.

25 February—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Austria.

8 March—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Greece.

10 March—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Norway.

18 March—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Sweden.

31 May—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and China.

18 June—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Denmark.

16 July-16 August—London Conference. Dawes Plan on reparations to be paid by Germany is adopted.

4 August—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Mexico.

8 August—general and trade treaties are signed between USSR and Great Britain.

28 October—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and France.

1925

20 January—diplomatic relations

are established between USSR and Japan.

5-16 October—Locarno Conference. Locarno agreements are initialled.

12 October—Soviet-German trade and economic treaty is signed.

15 December—agreement on trade and navigation is signed between USSR and Norway.

17 December—Soviet-Turkish treaty on friendship and neutrality is signed.

1926

16-19 February—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Saudi Arabia.

24 April—Soviet-German treaty on neutrality is signed in Berlin.

22-24 June—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Iceland.

21-22 August—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Uruguay.

31 August—Soviet-Afghan treaty on neutrality and non-aggression is signed.

28 September—treaty of friendship and neutrality is signed between USSR and Lithuania.

1927

May—Soviet Union participates in World Economic Conference in Geneva.

27 May—Britain severs diplomatic relations with Soviet Union.

7 June—P. L. Voikov, Soviet plenipotentiary representative, is assassinated in Warsaw.

1 October—Soviet-Iranian treaty on guarantees and neutrality is signed.

22 November—USSR submits for consideration by Preparatory Commission of League of Nations a declaration on general and total disarmament.

2 December—Soviet government announces its accession to Protocol of 17 June 1925 on the prohibition of the use in warfare of suffocating, poisoning and other similar gases and bacteriological means.

1928

15 February-23 March—USSR participates in work of Fifth Session of Preparatory Commission on convening disarmament conference. Soviet delegation tables a draft of the convention on total disarmament.

31 August—USSR accedes to Briand-Kellogg Pact.

1 November—treaty of friendship and trade is signed between USSR and Yemen.

1929

25 January—convention on conciliatory examination is signed between USSR and Germany.

9 February—Moscow Protocol on the advance effectiveness of the Briand-Kellogg Pact is signed between USSR, Poland, Estonia, Romania and Latvia.

July-December—conflict on Chinese Eastern Railway. China severs diplomatic relations with USSR.

3 October—diplomatic relations between USSR and Great Britain are re-established.

22 December—Soviet-Chinese protocol on liquidation of conflict on the Chinese Eastern Railway is signed.

1930

20 January—Hague Conference on Reparations approves Young Plan.

26 January—Mexico severs dip-

lomatic relations with USSR.

16 April—provisional trade agreement is concluded between USSR and Great Britain.

20 October—Council of People's Commissars of USSR releases special decision on economic relations with countries practising discrimination in trade with USSR.

1931

18 May—Soviet Union tables draft of protocol on economic non-aggression to European Commission of League of Nations.

24 June—Soviet-German protocol prolonging 1929 Berlin Treaty is signed.

1932

21 January—treaty on non-aggression and peaceful settlement of conflicts is concluded between USSR and Finland.

2 February-23 July—first session of international Disarmament Conference in Geneva. USSR tables proposals on general and total disarmament.

5 February—non-aggression treaty is concluded between USSR and Latvia.

4 May—treaty on non-aggression and peaceful settlement of conflicts is signed between USSR and Estonia.

25 July—non-aggression treaty is signed between USSR and Poland.

29 November—non-aggression treaty is signed between USSR and France.

12 December—diplomatic relations between USSR and China are re-established.

1933

6 February—Soviet Union tables draft convention on definition of the aggressor at international Disarmament Conference.

20 June—Soviet Union tables draft protocol on economic non-aggression at London World Economic Conference.

3-5 July—convention on definition of the aggressor is signed between USSR, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Lithuania.

28 July—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Spain.

2 September—treaty on non-aggression and neutrality is signed between USSR and Italy.

16 November—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and USA.

1934

4 February—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Hungary.

16 February—provisional Soviet-British trade agreement is signed.

3 June—USSR comes out with proposal to turn the international Disarmament Conference into a permanent peace forum.

9 June—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Romania.

9 June—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Czechoslovakia.

23 July—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Bulgaria.

17 September—diplomatic rela-

tions are established between USSR and Albania.

18 September—USSR joins League of Nations.

27 November—agreement on mutual support in case of aggression against one of the contracting parties is concluded between USSR and Mongolian People's Republic.

1935

23 March—agreement on sale of Chinese Eastern Railway is reached between USSR and Manchukuo.

2 May—Soviet-French treaty on mutual assistance is signed.

16 May—Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty on mutual assistance is signed.

25 June—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Colombia.

12 July—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Belgium.

26 August—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Luxemburg.

27 December—diplomatic relations between Uruguay and USSR are severed.

1936

12 March—protocol on mutual assistance is signed between USSR and Mongolian People's Republic.

20 July—Convention on the Straits Regime is signed at the Montreux Conference.

9 September—international agreement on non-interference in civil war in Spain is signed. International Non-Interference Committee is established.

25 November—Anti-Comintern Pact is signed between Germany and Japan.

1937

21 August—Soviet-Chinese non-aggression treaty is signed.

6 November—Italy accedes to Anti-Comintern Pact.

1938

17 March—USSR proposes to convene international conference for preserving peace. USSR government announces its readiness to render assistance to Czechoslovakia in case of aggression.

29 July-11 August—invasion of Soviet territory by Japanese troops at Lake Khasan and the defeat by Red Army.

5 September—USSR proposes to convene international conference in connection with the threat of nazi Germany aggression against Czechoslovakia.

20 September—USSR government gives positive answer to inquiry of President of Czechoslovakia concerning Soviet readiness to render assistance to Czechoslovakia in case of aggression against it.

21 September—Soviet representative in League of Nations speaks on need to protect Czechoslovakia against aggression.

23 September—Soviet government warns government of Poland about preparations for aggression against Czechoslovakia.

29-30 September—agreement on division of Czechoslovakia is signed at conference of representatives of Britain, France, Germany and Italy in Munich.

1939

15 March—German troops occupy Czechoslovakia.

18 March—Soviet government sends Note to German government stating that the incorporation of Bohemia and Slovakia in Germany contradicts international law and the principle of self-determination of nations.

21 March—Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations on mutual assistance against aggression begin.

22 March—TASS makes a report on USSR government's proposal to government of Britain to convene a conference of representatives of Britain, France, USSR, Poland, Romania and Turkey on measures to fight aggression.

11 May-16 September—Japan attacks Mongolian People's Republic at Khalkhin-Gol. Soviet and Mongolian troops defeat the aggressors.

12-21 August—negotiations of military missions of USSR, Britain and France in Moscow on a mutual assistance pact.

23 August—Soviet-German treaty of non-aggression is concluded.

1 September—nazi Germany attacks Poland. Second World War begins.

3 September—Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand declare war on Germany.

28 September—mutual assistance pact is concluded between USSR and Estonia.

28 September—treaty is signed establishing border between USSR and Germany.

September—Red Army liberates Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. They are reunited with Ukrainian and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republics.

5 October—mutual assistance pact is concluded between USSR and Latvia.

10 October—mutual assistance pact is concluded between USSR and Lithuania.

30 November 1939-12 March 1940—Soviet-Finnish war.

1940

12 March—Soviet-Finnish peace treaty is signed.

13 April—Soviet government sends Note to government of Germany stating that Swedish neutrality should not be violated.

10 May-25 June—"phoney war" is ended. Germany attacks Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg. Nazi German troops launch an offensive in France.

14 and 16 June—Soviet government sends Notes to governments of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on their violation of the mutual assistance pacts with USSR.

17, 20 and 21 June—fascist dictatorships in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are overthrown by the people and people's governments established.

22 June—capitulation of France. Compiègne Armistice is signed between Germany and France.

25 June—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Yugoslavia.

28-30 June—Romania returns Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to USSR.

3-6 August—Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Soviet Socialist Republics are accepted into USSR.

27 September—Tripartite Pact is signed in Berlin between Germany, Italy and Japan.

11 October—agreement on Aland Islands is signed between USSR and Finland.

12-13 April—Soviet-German negotiations are conducted in Berlin.

1941

3 March—Soviet government makes statement concerning Bulgarian government's agreement to admit German troops into Bulgaria.

12 March—diplomatic, trade and consular relations are established between USSR and Thailand.

5 April—treaty of friendship and non-aggression is concluded between USSR and Yugoslavia.

13 April—Soviet government issues statement on Hungary's attack on Yugoslavia.

13 April—neutrality pact is concluded between USSR and Japan.

16 May—exchange of Notes between USSR and Iraq on establishing diplomatic, trade and consular relations.

18 June—German-Turkish treaty of friendship and non-aggression is concluded.

22 June—nazi Germany and its allies perfidiously attack USSR. Great Patriotic War begins.

22 June—British government makes statement on its support of Soviet Union in war against Germany.

23 June—US President Roosevelt declares US government's readiness to render assistance to USSR.

12 July—agreement between His Majesty's Government in United Kingdom and government of USSR providing for joint action in war against nazi Germany is signed.

18 July—agreement between USSR and Czechoslovakia is signed in London on re-establishing diplomatic relations, on mutual assistance in war against nazi Germany and on the formation of Czechoslovak military units on Soviet territory.

22 July—agreement on mutual assistance in war against Germany is signed between USSR and Yugoslavia.

29 July-1 August—mission to Moscow of Harry Hopkins, friend and adviser of US President Roosevelt.

30 July—agreement between USSR and Poland is signed in London on re-establishing diplomatic relations, on mutual assistance in war against nazi Germany and on formation of Polish army on Soviet territory.

2 August—exchange of Notes between USSR and USA on extension of trade agreement and on US economic aid to Soviet Union in war against nazi Germany.

5 August—diplomatic relations are re-established between USSR and Norway.

7 August—diplomatic relations are re-established between USSR and Belgium.

10 August—Soviet and British governments issue assurances to Turkish government on honouring territorial inviolability of Turkey and on assistance in the event of an attack by a third European power.

16 August—Soviet-British agreement on trade, credit and clearing is signed in Moscow.

25 August—Soviet and British

governments send Notes to government of Iran on entry of their troops into Iran to prevent anti-Soviet activity of German agents there threatening USSR security.

10 September—USSR sends Note to government of Bulgaria in connection with use of Bulgarian territory by Germany as military base in war against USSR.

27 September—Soviet government makes a statement on its recognition of Free French movement and Soviet readiness to render it assistance in its struggle against nazi Germany.

29 September-1 October—Moscow conference of representatives of USSR, USA and Britain on mutual deliveries of military supplies.

7 November—US President Roosevelt's declaration on material assistance to USSR in accordance with the Lend-Lease Act.

18 November—USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs makes statement on Soviet government's position with respect to Finland and on treacherous stand of Finnish rulers.

3-4 December—negotiations of government of USSR with General Sikorski, head of Polish emigre government. Soviet-Polish declaration on friendship and mutual assistance.

5 December 1941-7 January 1942—rout of German troops near Moscow.

16-17 December—Anglo-Soviet negotiations in Moscow (Iden's mission).

1942

1 January—declaration is signed by 26 states in Washington (Declaration by the United Nations).

29 January—treaty of alliance is signed in Teheran between USSR, Great Britain and Iran.

26 May—Soviet-British Treaty of Alliance in the War Against Hitlerite Germany and Her Associates in Europe and of Collaboration and Mutual Assistance Thereafter is signed in London.

11 June—Soviet-US agreement on the principles underlying mutual assistance in the conduct of war against aggression is concluded.

12 June—Soviet-British and Soviet-American communiques on reaching a final agreement to open a second front in Europe in 1942 are published.

12 June—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Canada.

10 July—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Holland.

18 August—Soviet-British communique is signed on negotiations of heads of government of USSR and Britain, with participation of representative of US president, to be held in Moscow.

6 October—USSR, USA and Britain sign protocol on deliveries of military supplies.

14 October—Soviet government makes statement on responsibility of Hitlerite invaders and their accomplices for the atrocities they are perpetrating in the occupied European countries.

17 October—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Cuba.

12 November—diplomatic rela-

tions are re-established between USSR and Mexico.

19 November 1942-2 February 1943—Red Army puts to rout nazi German troops at Stalingrad.

18 December—joint declaration is published by governments of states forming anti-Hitlerite coalition on extermination of Jewish population in Europe perpetrated by nazi authorities.

18 December—USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs makes statement on independence of Albania.

1943

27 January—diplomatic relations are re-established between USSR and Uruguay.

21 April—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Ethiopia.

25 April—USSR severs relations with the Polish emigre government as a result of the latter's slander campaign against Soviet Union.

6 May—USSR makes statement on Soviet-Polish relations.

28 May—Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement is signed on assigning to government of Czechoslovak Republic of the means, material supplies and services to maintain Czechoslovak Brigade on Soviet territory.

26 August—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Egypt.

26 August—governments of USSR, USA and Britain recognise French Committee of National Liberation.

19 October—agreement on deliveries of military supplies is signed between USSR, USA and Britain.

19-30 October—Conference of Foreign Ministers of USSR, USA and Britain in Moscow.

30 October—declaration of the four nations (USSR, USA, Britain and China) on general security is signed in Moscow.

2 November—Anglo-Soviet-American communique on a conference of the three foreign ministers to be held in Moscow, the declarations on Italy and Austria, and the declarations by heads of the three governments on the Hitlerites' responsibility for the atrocities perpetrated are published.

28 November-1 December—Teheran Conference of heads of government of the three powers—USSR, USA and Great Britain.

12 December—treaty of friendship, mutual assistance and postwar cooperation is concluded between USSR and Czechoslovakia.

1944

11 January—Soviet government makes statement on Soviet-Polish relations.

1 February—Supreme Soviet of USSR adopts law conferring powers in the sphere of foreign relations on Union Republics and transforming in this connection the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs from an all-Union into a Union-Republican.

1 March—Informbureau of USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs issues statement relating to negotiations between Paasikivi, representative of government of Finland, and A. M. Kollontai, Soviet Minister to Stockholm, on terms on which Soviet government is ready to negoti-

ate cessation of hostilities.

17 March—Finnish government declines Soviet terms of negotiations on cessation of hostilities.

2 April—Soviet government issues statement to the effect that while continuing the offensive in Romania, it does not pursue the aim of annexing any part of the latter's territory.

12 April—terms of an armistice are presented to Romania.

13 April—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and New Zealand.

16 April—Soviet government issues statement on political status of Italy.

22 April—Soviet government issues statement on Soviet-Finnish relations.

23 April—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Denmark.

8 May—diplomatic and consular relations are established between USSR and Costa Rica.

13 May—governments of USSR, USA and Britain propose that Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Finland cease fighting on the side of nazi Germany.

6 June—Allied troops land in Normandy, opening Second Front.

21 July—Polish Committee of National Liberation is formed in Lublin.

22 July—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Syria.

26 July—USSR Commissariat for Foreign Affairs makes declaration on stand of USSR with respect to Poland.

3 August—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Lebanon.

21 August-28 September—Conference of representatives of USSR, USA, Great Britain and later China in Dumbarton Oaks (Washington) on establishing an international security organisation.

12 September—armistice agreement is signed in Moscow between USSR, USA and Great Britain on the one hand, and Romania on the other.

19 September—armistice agreement is signed in Moscow between USSR and Great Britain on the one hand, and Finland on the other.

9-18 October—negotiations of heads of government of USSR and Great Britain in Moscow.

23 October—Soviet government recognises Provisional Government of French Republic.

25 October—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Italy.

28 October—armistice agreement is signed in Moscow between USSR, Great Britain and USA on the one hand, and Bulgaria on the other.

2-10 December—negotiations in Moscow with de Gaulle, head of French Provisional Government.

10 December—treaty of alliance and mutual assistance is signed in Moscow between USSR and French Republic.

11 December—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Chile.

12 December—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Nicaragua.

1945

4 January—Soviet government recognises Provisional National Government of Polish

Republic.

20 January—USSR, USA and Britain sign armistice agreement with Hungary.

4-12 February—Crimea (Yalta) Conference of heads of government of the three powers—USSR, USA and Great Britain.

8 March—diplomatic and consular relations are established between USSR and Dominican Republic.

14 March—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Venezuela.

19 March—Soviet government denounces treaty of friendship and neutrality with Turkey of 17 December 1925.

2 April—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Brazil.

5 April—Soviet government denounces neutrality pact concluded with Japan on 13 April 1941.

11 April—treaty of friendship, mutual assistance and postwar cooperation is signed in Moscow between USSR and Yugoslavia.

18 April—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Bolivia.

19 April—diplomatic relations are established between USSR and Guatemala.

21 April—treaty of friendship, mutual assistance and postwar cooperation is signed in Moscow between USSR and Poland.

25 April-26 June—Conference of the United Nations in San Francisco, UN Charter is adopted.

2 May—Red Army captures Berlin.

8 May—representatives of German Supreme Command sign Act of Military Surrender of Germany.

9 May—Red Army liberates Prague, capital of Czechoslovakia.

16 May—diplomatic relations between USSR and Denmark are re-established.

5 June—declaration regarding the defeat of Germany and assumption of supreme power over Germany by governments of USSR, Great Britain, USA and Provisional Government of France is signed in Berlin, and on 6 June, a brief summary of the agreements earlier concluded on zones of occupation and the control machinery in Germany is published.

16 June—diplomatic and consular relations are established between USSR and Ecuador.

29 June—treaty on reunification of Transcarpathian Ukraine with Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic is signed between USSR and Czechoslovakia.

17 July-2 August—Potsdam Conference of heads of government of USSR, USA and Britain.

6 August—USSR re-establishes diplomatic relations with Romania and Finland.

8 August—USSR officially accedes to the Potsdam declaration of USA, Britain and China concerning Japan.
USSR declares war on Japan as of 9 August 1945.

8 August—agreement is signed in London by USSR, USA, Great Britain and France on setting up an International Military Tribunal for trial of chief war criminals of Axis powers.

9 August—Soviet Union enters

war against Japan.

9 August—governments of USSR, USA, Britain and France publish the agreements on zones of occupation and control machinery of the Allies in Austria.

14 August—treaty of friendship and alliance between USSR and China, and agreements on Chinese Changchun Railway, Port Arthur and Port Dalny are signed.

14 August—diplomatic relations between USSR and Bulgaria are re-established.

16 August—treaty on Soviet-Polish state border is signed between USSR and Polish People's Republic.

2 September—representatives of Japan sign Act of Military Surrender of Japan in Tokyo. The Second World War is brought to an end.

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